

HEALING RITUALS
AS AN
EXPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT
AMONG THE MPANGU
(OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
CONGO-KINSHASA)

Presented by
MARIE-ANGÈLE KITEWO

For Ph.D. Degree in
African Religious Thought

June 1998



ProQuest Number: 10672797

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10672797

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this thesis is to explore several selected healing rituals performed by the *Mpangu* people with the purpose of elaborating aspects of their religious thought.

The thesis is composed of two parts. The first, comprising four chapters, is a detailed description-interpretation of four healing rituals: *Kiziku*, *Nyóká-N'káwu*, *Kubóónda* and the Sunday Worship ritual of *Dibuundu di Mpeeve a N'loongo* (the Church of the Holy Spirit). The account of each healing ritual is followed by a commentary which is a kind of second reading of the ritual, providing appropriate explanation of keywords and the specific cultural context of the ritual.

The second part of the thesis, comprising two chapters, is a comparative analysis of the four healing rituals which identifies the elements common to the rituals and the religious concepts expressed in them. Most fundamental among these concepts is the idea that the well being of the living community is dependent upon harmony with the ancestors, and other "spiritual entities", who reside in an invisible "other world". Communication between the inhabitants of these two worlds, and the maintenance of appropriate reciprocal relationships among them, are seen to be essential to the maintenance of this harmony. From another perspective, it can be said that the existence of illness, death and misfortune indicates that this essential harmony has been eroded, and the healing rituals provide the appropriate context and actions through which proper relationships with the ancestors and other spiritual entities can be restored.

CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	2
Contents	3
Index of Figures	6
Acknowledgements	7
 Chapter 1 : Introduction	 10
1.1. The <i>Kóongo-Mpangu</i> Universe	10
1.1.1. <i>Nzáambi</i> (God)	11
1.1.2. <i>Bakúlu</i> (ancestors)	12
1.1.3. <i>Bankíta</i> or <i>Mpoongo</i> (a special group of spirits of the dead)	13
1.1.4. <i>Mpeeve</i> (spirits)	15
1.2. The <i>Kóongo-Mpangu</i>	17
1.3. Previous Studies and the Present Contribution	25
1.4. Research in the Field	29
1.5. Transcription	32
1.6. Translation into English	33
PART ONE:	
DESCRIPTION OF FOUR MPANGU HEALING RITUALS	36
 Chapter 2 : A Healing Ritual: <i>Kizíku</i>	 37
2.1. Background and Context	38
2.2. Performance of <i>Kizíku</i>	38
2.2.1. <i>Kinzoongi</i>	39
2.2.2. <i>Kizíku</i>	53
A – <i>Mbóóka</i> (Calls)	
B – <i>Kaangu ye Kúbuka</i> (Covenant and Healing procedure)	58
C – <i>Matóóndo</i> (Thanksgiving)	63
2.3. Reading the ritual <i>Kizíku</i> : Towards an Interpretation	64
2.3.1. <i>Kinzoongi</i>	65
2.3.2. <i>Mbóóka</i> (Calls, invocations)	66
2.3.3. <i>Kaangu ye Kúbuka</i>	71
2.3.4. <i>Matóóndo</i> (Thanksgiving)	80
 Chapter 3 : <i>N'kiku mi Bankita</i> (<i>Bankita</i> Rituals)	 86
3.1. <i>Kutoombula Bankítá</i> (To bring <i>Bankíta</i> from the water)	86
3.2. <i>Kuyáála Nkítá</i> (Initiation for the service of <i>Bankíta</i>)	93
3.3. The <i>Mpangu</i> Concept of <i>Bankíta</i>	97
3.4. <i>Nyóká-N'káwu</i>	106
3.4.1. <i>Kusuunsula mbeefo</i> (To introduce the patient)	107
3.4.2. <i>Kubúka</i> (Healing procedures)	109
A – <i>Kudyaatila</i> (Massage with feet)	109

B – <i>Kunwúika</i> (Taking the medicines)	111
--	-----

Chapter 4: A Healing Ritual: <i>Kubóónda</i>	117
4.1. Performance of the Ritual <i>Kubóónda</i>	118
4.1.1. <i>Kukeembisa Bansimba</i> (Praise for the Twins)	119
4.1.2. <i>Kubóónda</i> (To strengthen)	131
4.2. The Role of the Twins in the Healing Rituals	160
4.2.1. An Ambiguous Phenomenon	160
1 – Religious Aspect	161
2 – Social Aspect	164
3 – Material Aspect	166
4.2.2. Specific Roles of the Twins and Their Rituals in the Society	167
 Chapter 5: E.C.U.S.E. or <i>Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'Loongo</i>	 172
(The Church of the Holy Spirit)	
5.1. Beginning of the Parish E.C.U.S.E. at <i>Nkááandu</i>	173
5.2. Timetable of the Parish E.C.U.S.E./ <i>Nkááandu</i>	175
5.3. The Sunday Worship: <i>Matóóndo</i>	176
5.3.1. <i>Mpedozo</i>	176
5.3.2. <i>Matóóndo</i>	182
A – <i>N'kúúngá mí lúsiku</i> (Songs of Praise)	182
B – <i>Lusáámbu</i> (Prayer)	185
C – <i>Ngimbulu</i> (Performance of Songs)	190
D – <i>Ntaambula banzéénza</i> (Welcoming Visitors)	196
E – <i>Lusáámbú lú N'vúúngi</i> (Prayer of the Pastor)	196
F – <i>N'sámú mí Dibuundu</i> (Church News)	197
5.3.3. <i>Lunyáákúsu</i> (Healing Intercession)	198
5.3.4. <i>N'sámu</i> (Revelations)	202
1st Case: <i>N'fú</i> (Spirit of a Dead Person)	202
2nd Case: <i>Fúna</i> (Bad Luck)	204
3rd Case: <i>Kuyaadika</i> (Investiture)	205
4th Case: <i>N'fwíllu</i> (Misfortune)	207
5.4. Healing the Whole Person	209
5.4.1. Major Aspects of Healing	209
5.4.2. Spiritual Healing of the Individual	210
5.4.3. Healthy for Praise	211
5.4.4. Social Healing	212

PART TWO:

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *MPANGU* HEALING RITUALS 220

Chapter 6 : Ritual Actions and Symbols as Expressions of *Mpangu* Religious Thought 221

6.1. Ritual Opening Segment: The Preparation	226
6.1.1. Greetings	226
6.1.2. Sacralisation of the Space	226
6.1.3. Songs	227
6.1.4. Dance	227
6.1.5. Narrative	228
6.1.6. Speech	228
6.1.7. Introduction of the Patient	230
6.1.8. Invocations	231
6.2. Main Segment: The Ritual Itself	231
6.2.1. Encounter With Spiritual Entities	231
6.2.2. Calls, Incantations, Invocations and Prayers	233
6.2.3. <i>Kubúka</i> (Healing Procedure)	234
6.2.4. <i>Kubikula</i> (Revelation)	234
6.2.5. Sharing "Food" and "Drink"	235
6.2.6. Concluding Ritual Actions	236
6.3. Exploration of Religious Concepts	237
6.3.1. The Concept of the Two Worlds	238
6.3.2. The Search for <i>Ngwílsáni</i> (Harmony)	240
6.3.3. The Concept of Communication	243
6.3.4. Assuaging the Spiritual Causes of Human Suffering	245

Chapter 7 : Verbal Expressions of *Mpangu* Religious Thought 247

7.1. <i>Kutá Kinzoonzi</i> (Performing the Art of Public Speaking)	249
7.1.1. <i>N'kéenda</i> (Narratives)	250
7.1.2. <i>Bingána</i> (Proverbs)	251
7.1.3. <i>Bimbúmbi</i> (Special Style of Dialogue)	253
7.2. <i>Kingaanga-Discourse</i> (Hidden Knowledge)	255
7.2.1. <i>Kusíba</i> (To Pronounce Incantations)	258
7.2.2. <i>Mbóóka</i> and <i>Lusáámbu</i> (Calls, Invocations and Prayers)	265
7.3. <i>N'kúúnga</i> (Song-Text)	268
7.3.1. Song-Texts in the Opening Segment of the Healing Ritual	272
7.3.2. Song-Texts in the Main Segment of the Healing Rituals	275

Summary and Conclusion 282

Appendix : Different types of *Kinzoonzi* 287

List of Informants 303

Bibliography 311

INDEX OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Map: <i>Bampangu</i> Land	p.18
Figure 1: <i>Bési káánda</i> (members of the clan)	p.21
Figure 2: <i>Kaanda di Kintuumba</i> (the clan Ntuumba)	p.74
Figure 3: Structure of a healing ritual: <i>Kizíku</i>	p.222
Figure 4: Structure of a healing ritual: <i>Nyóká-N'káwu</i>	p.223
Figure 5: Structure of a healing ritual: <i>Kubóónda</i>	p.224
Figure 6: Structure of a healing ritual: <i>Matóóndo</i>	p.225
Photographs:	
Contents of <i>lukóbi</i>	p.57
<i>Nsyóóná Mángítúka "Le Blanc"</i>	p.103
<i>Lugéémba</i>	p.104
Young mother of twins	p.120
<i>Zoomba</i> inhabited by the spirits of the twins	p.130
<i>Zoomba</i> doing <i>kudyaatila</i>	p.134
The second pair of baby twins	p.146

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis has been a long and communal work. Many people have contributed to it in many different ways. For outstanding supervision and academic counselling, I am grateful to Professor Louis Brenner. His support and encouragement, especially during a period of darkness, were very much appreciated.

I am also indebted to Dr. G. Furniss for agreeing to be a member of my research committee, and for supporting me, and helping me, especially when everything seemed blocked. For the same kind of support and assistance, I thank Ms. Lucy Duran. I have also benefited from discussions with Professor Paul Gifford whose advice helped me greatly in interpreting religious aspects of human behaviour and activities. I thank my co-research students for helpful suggestions during our seminars.

This thesis could not even have been begun without the generosity and kindness of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the British Province. For all their help with study fees and everyday expenses, and especially for their continued personal support and encouragement, I am very grateful, especially to the Provincial Team, to Sister Corrie Korsmit and her assistants. Many thanks to Mrs. Frances Thomas for her special intervention in international administrative matters and for her support.

I am grateful also to the Africa Department for its academic support, and to S.O.A.S. for the travel grant which enabled me to undertake research in the field in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Similarly, I would like to thank the Central Research Fund for financial assistance which defrayed some of the transport expenses I incurred within my country during the research period.

For her continual assistance, step by step, to help me to think and write in English, I thank especially Sister Marie-Julie Alvarez, and I also thank her for the great support of her friendship. For their prayers, goodwill, support and encouragement, I thank the members of the Notre Dame community in Nightingale Lane and others in London and in Liverpool, Oxford and Worcester (USA).

A thankful remembrance of my parents for inspiring me and maintaining great interest in the religious aspects of our cultural traditions, and for their legacy of a strong faith in God.

May my numerous friends at S.O.A.S. be thanked here for their encouraging and cheerful smiles and words: Wangari Muoria-Sal, Drs. Frances Harding, Nana Wilson-Tagoe, Martin Orwin and Akin Oyetade. Special thanks to Dr. Malami Buba to whom I could turn for help. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Luis Nicolau for his generous assistance, especially for handling of the final version of this thesis.

Also a thankful remembrance of my former teachers, especially Professor René De Haes and Patrice Mufuta Kabemba, respectively at the "Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa" and at the National University of Zaire (Lubumbashi), for introducing me to religious and cultural studies.

All those who supplied information and granted me interviews, and those whose names are listed in this thesis, have played a determining role. I am grateful to all of them for their important contribution to this study. I would like to mention Etienne Manzéénza and Gustave N'koko for forwarding information through correspondence after the fieldwork period.

My thanks go especially to the Notre Dame Provincial Team in Congo-Kinshasa for giving me the time needed for the completion of this thesis. And I remember Sisters Marie-Julie Kizunza, Adrienne Kapela, Chantal Kisimbila and Liliane Sweko for their very special support, prayers and friendship. A very special thank you to my brother Gérard Mukoko for sharing all the anxiety related to this kind of enterprise, and for his support.

I would like to thank Susan and Arnold Francq, Gertrud Booty, Amparo Escobar, Adrien Ngudi, Janet and Rita Ejobe, Klara Chastan, Christine Kisawuzi and all the

members of my Cell Ministry group in St. Mary's parish (Clapham), for their supporting friendship and prayers, during my stay in London.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to all who assisted me in improving my skills in written and spoken English. All these people, particularly my supervisor and the Notre Dame community in Worcester, MA, deserve to share any positive outcome from this work.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to provide a description of contemporary healing rituals as an aspect of religious expression among the *Mpangu* of Lower Congo. It focuses on the *Mpangu* people, a sub-group within the *Bakóongo* (or *Kóongo*) ethnic group of Lower Congo, more specifically within the present-day Roman Catholic diocese of *Kisaantu*. According to “Annuaire de l’Eglise Catholique au Zaïre”, 1993-94, the population of the diocese of *Kisaantu* is 550,000 of whom 443,000 are Catholics (78.2%).

1.1. The Kóongo-Mpangu Universe

The *Mpangu*, as all the *Bakóongo*, express great concern for *luziingu* (life), not simply in terms of being alive, or physical life, but more by ensuring a harmony among all the forces which influence life. According to them, both the individual and the community as a whole should enjoy good health, prosperity, and all kinds of blessings. This is what the *Mpangu* mean when they speak about *kuvwá luziingu lúmboti* (to have a good life) or *kutómá kú káánda* (the well-being and welfare of the clan) which are fundamental principles of their culture and society.

Of course, the ideal harmonious life is repeatedly disturbed by unsettling events, such as death and illness, conflicts among members within the clan, childlessness (in women), failure of all kinds (in men) and various misfortunes which befall the community. Religious and healing rituals are therefore enacted in order to restore a harmonious balance.

It is important to note that the *Mpangu* concept of healing does not make any distinction between psychological, mental and social causes of illness (Buakasa, 1988: 84). The goal aimed at by the therapy is to re-establish the sick person’s identity according to his/her cultural position in the society (Sow, I., 1977 quoted by

Buakasa,1988). This is the way the healing action provided by the healing rituals must be interpreted.

This is an aspect of being healed which cannot be obtained either from the hospital or from the missionaries' clinics. The whole action of healing is an attempt to seek to explain why afflictions are distributed as they are (MacGaffey,1983:148) and how to liberate the victims. This concern pushes the *Kóongo-Mpangu* to examine the social environment of the "sick" person in order to identify sources of tensions in social relations.

The search for harmony can only be understood in connection with the general view of the universe according to the *Mpangu* thinking. The study of *Mpangu* cosmology helps to locate the rituals in their social and cultural context for "we cannot really understand action unless we also understand the belief and theory on which it is based, the converse is also true. We cannot fully comprehend belief unless we see it in action" (du Toit,1985:82).

The *Kóongo-Mpangu* universe is composed of two worlds, one is visible, the other invisible. Each is inhabited by categories of beings and the relations between the two worlds are relations of time, space, and cause (MacGaffey,1986:43). Individual and communal life in the visible world, are affected by these beings whom I would like to call the "living-forces". The intervention of the invisible beings is a matter of fact throughout the healing rituals described in this thesis.

Speaking of the two worlds, the people use specific terms: "*kú nseki*", referring to the land of the living community, and "*ku mása*" indicating the land of the dead who are actually regarded as the dead-living (J. Mbiti,1970:107). Important categories of beings in the invisible world are *Nzáambi* (God), *bakúlu* (ancestors), *bankíta* (a special group of spirits of the dead), *bisímbi* (local spirits), and *matébo* (ghosts). Interaction between the inhabitants of the two communities expresses the *Mpangu* concept of these entities.

1.1.1. *Nzáambi* (God)

The Mpangu refer to *Nzáambi* as the Supreme Being, the creator of all things. He is *Nzáambi-Mpuungu* (God Almighty). They do not go further to define their concept of God; they say “*Nzaambi, Nzáambi kwáni*” (God is God), (Van Wing,1959:306).

Although in many cases rituals provide the privileged context for encounter with invisible beings, the *Mpangu* acknowledge that “*Nzáambi kámóníkáa ko, mu máváángá kámónikínáanga yé mú bídímbu*” (God is invisible, he becomes visible in his deeds and signs), so said Antoine during the ritual *Kizíku*. Through the song-texts sung during the ritual at Sunday Worship (V,10), believers referred to *Nzáambi* as the One prayed to by their forefathers; he is also called *Dééso* (Janzen & MacGaffey,1974:127; Van Wing,1959:306).

The *Mpangu* concept of *Nzáambi* (God) can be summarised as the general acknowledgement of the existence of a remote supreme spirit considered all-powerful and the origin of all things. *Nzáambi* is different from other spirits of *Mpangu* cosmology; he is outside the clan and lineage while *bakúlu* (ancestors) are part of these social structures.

1.1.2. *Bakúlu* (ancestors).

The term *bakúlu* (singular: *n'kúlu*) refers to all the deceased persons who have lived honestly, and have played an important role in the clan in their lifetime. Practically only honest and good persons who have had offspring in their lifetime, are regarded as ancestors (Van Wing,1959:309; Mufuta,1983:180). These are the beings to whom the healer addresses invocations and prayers.

Most of the informants, during the research in the field, strongly affirmed the experience of *bakúlu*'s intervention in their professional life of healer. Not only were they directed, assisted and guided by these spirits, but they were also appointed according to *bakúlu* initiative, as we shall see later. The phenomenon of the existence of *bakúlu* is related to the concept of death among the *Mpangu*. *Lufwá* (death) is regarded as an alternative form of being which is characterised by its invisibility. Commonly, people say that *muuntu, mééso kaka kazimáanga* (one dies only to sight), that is, life does not end at death. Further, life after death is considered more powerful than that before death. Concisely expressed in a lapidary style Van Wing (ibid:250) wrote:

“Les morts sont les vivants par excellence; ils sont doués d’une vie qui dure”. (The dead are the living par excellence; they are endowed with everlasting life).

In Buakasa's terms (1988:34), *bakúlu* are referred to as the departed members of the clan. The term “departed” means that after death these persons leave the visible world, they are hidden from the living community; their life style changes from the visible to an invisible form. In different ways, *bakúlu* look after the living community in the visible world.

1.1.3. *Bankíta* or *Mpoongo* (a special group of spirits of the dead)

Bankíta is the plural form used to indicate a special group of spirits of the dead. The term *Nkíta* is employed for both the singular and plural forms. The two will be indiscriminately used in this thesis.

The concept of *Bankíta* is connected with that of *bakúlu*. Actually, both objects and specific beings are regarded by the *Mpangu* as *Bankíta*. In the houses, *Bankíta* are represented by the stones, kaolin ball, walking stick, animal's horn, etc. Some of these stones are called by the names of ancestors, and so they are these ancestors, for their spirit animates the objects, then called *mpoongo*. This can explain why the healer addresses them for protection, assistance and guidance during the healing action. The same objects are used as instruments for the healing session.

Regarding the origin of *Bankíta*, Buakasa's (1980) hypothesis seems accurate (as discussed in section 1.3.), that *Bankíta* are the spirits of a group of ancestors who died in violent circumstances. *Budyóóngo*'s story, in chapter 3, supports this interpretation. However, Buakasa does not clearly distinguish between these beings and *bisímbi* (local spirits). This confusion characterises *Mpangu* thinking when they speak of *bankíta* and *bisímbi*. They say: "*Bisímbi, a ndé bési mása; mpeeve zí bákulu*" (*Bisímbi* are the water citizens; [they are] ancestors' spirits).

Not all the spirits of the persons who died from violence are called *Bankíta*. Only those spirits regarded as the members of the clan play this role. It follows from Buakasa's hypothesis that *Bankíta* and *bisímbi* constitute a group of beings endowed with special power originating from their violent death. Given that the clans seek to be protected and to prosper, they manage to appropriate this power by incorporating them into the clans. This can explain one of the forms of absorption into kin group mentioned by MacGaffey,(1986:25). Those outside the clans constitute the different groups of *bisímbi*, considered as enemies.

The story *Kutoombula Bankíta*. (to bring *Bankíta* from the water), reported by *Basáwula* in chapter 3, illustrates this situation when *Makáya*, the patient, revealed the cause of her long illness and the misfortune in the family. She said that that happened because her deceased father was trying to buy a gift (*Bankíta* power) to help his children who were going through hard times.

As in the case of *bakúlu*, the relationships between human beings and *Bankíta* are characterised by ambiguity. The latter protect, as well as attack, their kin-people in various ways. By interpreting a number of lasting illnesses and misfortunes, the *Mpangu* discover special messages conveyed by *bakúlu*. The two stories reported in chapter 3 illustrate this. These rituals make it clear that the concept of *Bankíta* is closely connected to the well-being and welfare of the clan. Those who are given this gift by the ancestors consider themselves privileged. The service requested in turn creates, however, obligations which provoke fear of *Bankíta* anger when they are not

satisfied. Practically all these beings are thought of in terms of spirits. However, the *Mpangu* distinguish other groups of beings called *mpeeve* (spirits) ...

1.1.4. *Mpeeve* (spirits)

This term indicates the state of bodylessness. For the *Mpangu*, *bakúlu* are believed to have a body which is invisible to an ordinary person; an initiated person, such as the sorcerer, can see them. *Bankíta* are represented by a variety of forms as we have said above. *Mpeeve* fall into two categories: *mpeeve zimbote* (good spirits) and *mpeeve zimbi* (evil spirits) or *matébo* (ghosts).

The common belief maintains that the persons who after death are refused admission to the rank of *bakúlu* (ancestors) in their villages, become *matébo* (singular: *tébo* – ghosts). Having no dwelling, they wander about in the forests and in rivers, and can be accidentally seen by human beings. This is the greatest misfortune that can befall an individual.

Regarding the origin of *matébo*, they are either the spirits of the persons to whom the rank of *bakúlu* was refused after death, or, referring to Buakasa's hypothesis mentioned above, the spirits of 'enemies' defeated during the battles, but not absorbed into kin group. All are opposed to *bakúlu*, and are harmful to the human beings. The case of *n'fú* studied in chapter 5 (first case) illustrates the evil influence of *matébo* on the young girl.

To defeat the evil spirits the *Mpangu* call on the good spirits. According to the *E.C.U.S.E.* (The Church of the Holy Spirit) interpretation, *Mpeeve ya N'loongo* (The Holy Spirit), is the Spirit of God. He embraces all good spirits. He is regarded as the Supreme Spirit, the one the forefathers were given by God, the one to whom the believers call on now, in prayers and songs (V,1; V,4).

The key point in this brief survey of *Mpangu* cosmology is communication. The people long to maintain good relationships with all the **living-forces** which affect life. Given that illness, death and all kinds of misfortunes are interpreted as the sign of the

broken relationships with the invisible world, the healing rituals constitute the context par excellence in order to make their feelings and beliefs a reality. The performance of healing rituals stands as an embodiment of abstract thought, which becomes “visible” through actions, gestures, words, etc. They reveal a hidden link between the area of belief and the living. This link enables the *Mpangu* to ensure the vital communication with the invisible powers.

The reflections contained in this chapter aim at an introduction to the *Kóongo-Mpangu* peoples regarding their daily living and religious environment. It includes an outline of previous studies related to the healing rituals in the *Mpangu* society. It is also an attempt to state the contribution of the present research to the continuing field of investigation into healing rituals and religious expression. The methods used to gather, record, transcribe and translate information will be described to give an idea of the way the research was conducted.

The thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part is composed of a detailed description of four healing rituals which constitute the body of material for the study: *Kiziku* (ch.2), *Bankita*(ch.3), *Bansímba* (ch.4) and *E.C.U.S.E.* (ch.5). Two stages characterise this description:

- a. the reconstruction of the ritual through an account of its performance;
- b. a commentary, which is a kind of "revision" of the account of the ritual.

The comments provide explanations of key points during the ritual, and its general interpretation in the cultural context.

The second part of the thesis deals with the analysis of the healing rituals according to the structure, actions and symbols used as expressions of thought (ch.6). The narratives, invocations, prayers and songs are analysed as verbal expressions of *Mpangu* religious thought (ch.7).

A summary and brief reflection based on the concept of the healing rituals and the phenomenon of religion in *Mpangu* society, will constitute the conclusion of this study.

1.2. The *Kóongo-Mpangu*

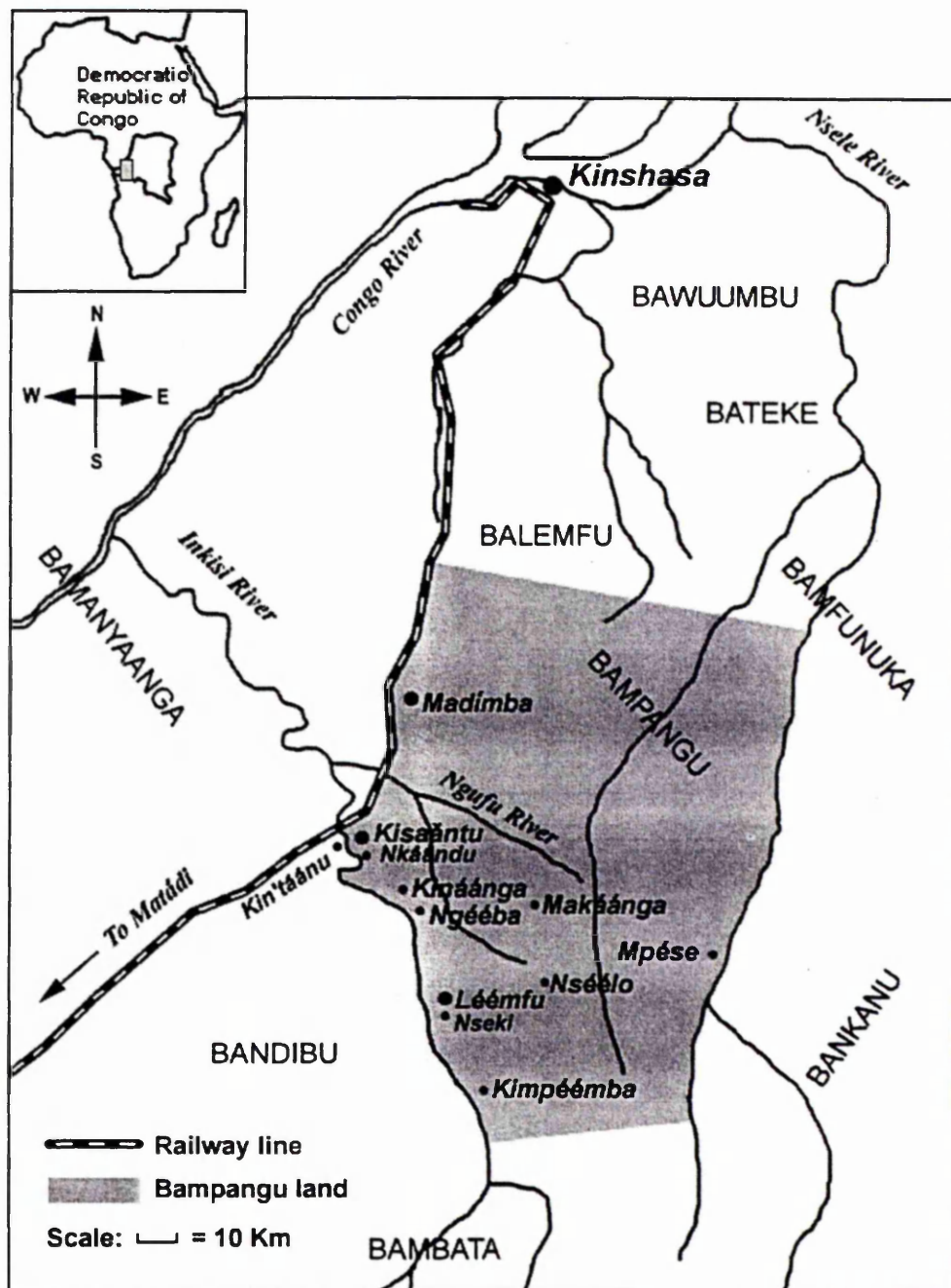
The term *Mpangu* or *Bampangu* indicates a sub-group of the *Bakóongo* people which forms the *Kóongo* ethnic group. The same term is also used to refer to one of the six provinces of the former *Kóongo* Kingdom.

Historically, 1482 is a date of great significance for the *Bakóongo* people. It is the beginning of their history on the international level, the year when **Diogo Cao**, the Portuguese admiral, discovered the mouth of the *Kóongo* River (also called: **Zaire** River, between 1971 and 1997). The *Kóongo* Kingdom which he found there was composed of six provinces: *Mpéémba*, *Sóyo*, *Mbaamba*, *Mbáta*, *Nsúúndi*, and *Mpangu* (Balandier, 1965). These were also the names of the founding ancestor ruler of the province, of his residence and of the inhabitants over whom he ruled¹. The *Mpangu* people therefore resided in the province of the same name.

Nowadays, *Bampangu* are called *Bantándu* (singular: *muntándu*) which is a recent name.² Although the people call themselves *Bakóongo* or *Bantándu*, the elders acknowledge their ancient name of *Bampangu* which is a direct link with other sub-groups of the same ethnic group.

The *Kóongo* ethnic group occupies part of the Western Coast of Africa, close to the Equator and on both sides of the *Kóongo* River, from the Congo Republic (capital: **Brazzaville**) on the North, through the Democratic Republic of the Congo (capital: **Kinshasa**), and into Angola, and extending inland several hundreds of miles.

When the Europeans drew the colonial boundaries in 1885, the territory of the *Kóongo* ethnic group was divided into three nations which are known nowadays as: Angola, the Congo Republic (capital: **Brazzaville**) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo



(capital: Kinshasa). *Bampangu* belong to the *Kóongo* group of Congo-Kinshasa which is composed of several sub-ethnic groups: *Bandíbu*, *Bamanyaanga/Bansúundi*, *Bantándu/Bampangu*, *Bayoombe* and *Bazómbo*. All inhabit the region called Lower Congo.

The climate of the area is tropical, with a hot, rainy season extending from mid September-October to mid-May, broken for several weeks in February. The dry season is somewhat cooler, the sky being overcast much of the time. The end of August is characterised by a short hot period which is an introduction to the rainy season. Temperatures vary considerably with altitude. The vegetation changes and gradually becomes a savannah as one gains altitude (MacGaffey,1970:8), but also as a result of human action. Large forests and gallery forests along stream beds are cut down by the inhabitants who seek to earn money by selling wood.

To the West, the *Mpangu* are conventionally separated from their neighbours, the *Bandíbu* and *Bansúundi (Bamanyaanga)* by the In'kisi River, and to the South, from the *Bambáta* by the Mfidi River. To the North, are the *Balémfu* and *Bawúumbu* (related to *Batéke*). Throughout this area the *Kikóongo* language is spoken, although the dialects vary widely, some of them being hardly intelligible to the speakers of other dialects.

The *Mpangu* may be described as peasants. Agriculture is their main source of income, especially in the countryside. They cultivate the soil with hand tools, and endeavour to sell as much as they can of their produce (manioc, beans, peanuts, sweet potatoes, gourd, sugar-cane and so on). Nowadays, many of the trade enterprises and factories established by private initiative are in crisis due primarily to the great insecurity caused by political instability.

For both economic reasons, and in the search for greater security, many people have moved in recent decades from the villages to agglomerations built around the nearest favourable centre. The main agglomerations in the *Mpangu* lands are:

Nkáándu: surrounding the Catholic mission complex of *Kisaantu* which, with *Kin'táánu*, on the right shore of the In'kisi River, had constituted years ago, an important cultural and commercial nucleus of the *Bampangu* (MacGaffey, *ibid.*:12).

Madimba: about 30Km to the North of *Kisaantu*, is the former arrondissement capital set up during the colonial period and early sixties, after the Independence of the country of Congo-Kinshasa.

Ngééba: located at 15Km to the South of *Kisaantu*, started as an administrative subdivision of the arrondissement.

Nséki: is located around the Roman Catholic parish of *Léémfu* which is 30Km to the South of *Kisaantu*.

Nséélo and *Kimpéémba*: were developed in the area of the Baptist Missionary communities. (Refer to the map).

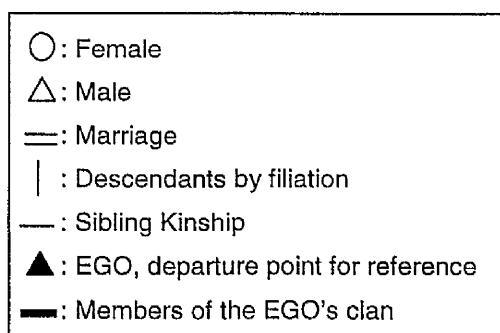
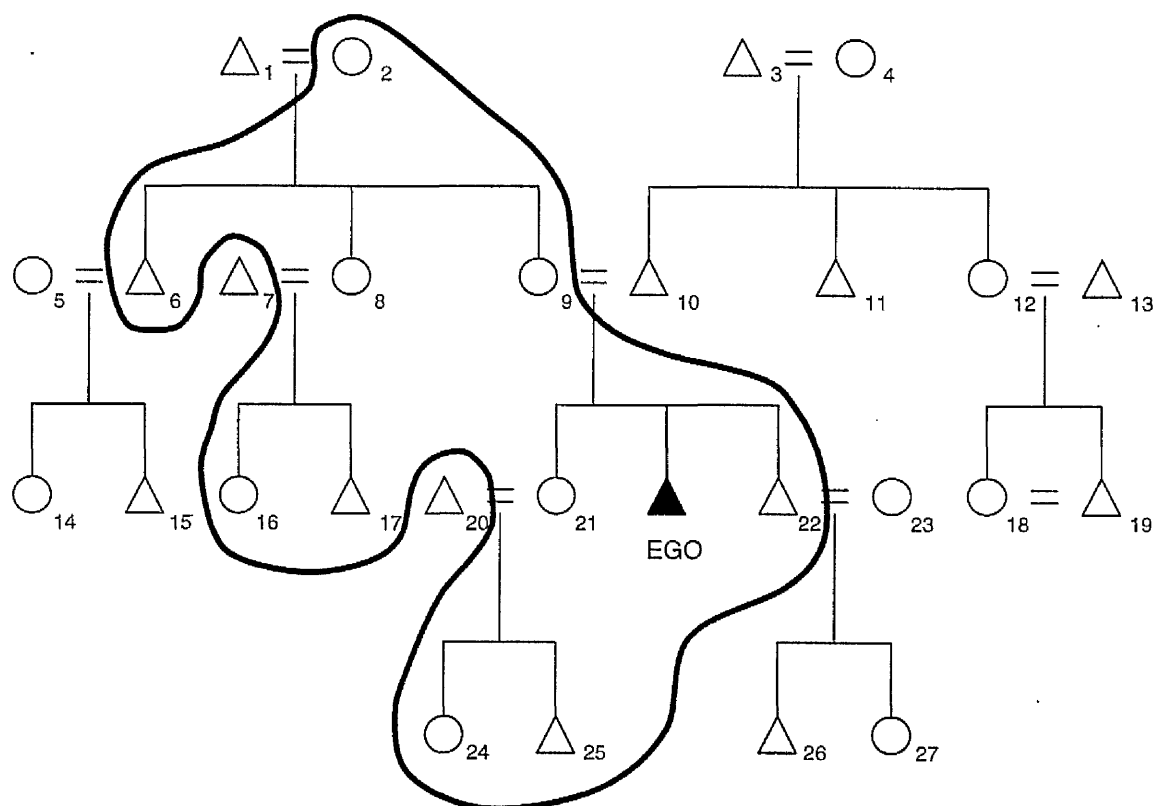
A consequence of the resettlement in these agglomerations has been the slow disappearance of many villages, both large and small. The lack of land for agriculture around these agglomerations is one of the causes of hunger in the region. The *Mpangu* area is one of the poorest regions in the country.

The *Mpangu*, like all *Bakóongo* groups, maintain the matrilineal social system rooted in a nucleus of social organisation called *Kaanda* (clan). It is a community of relations who share among its members a single heritage, and it is composed of both the living and the dead. *Kaanda* can be defined as "a collectivity of all the uterine descendants of a common ancestress who bear the name of this collectivity. It includes all the individuals of both sexes whether living beneath the earth or on it [...], the deceased and living who have received the ancestress' blood, directly or indirectly" (Van Wing, 1959:85).

Briefly, it could be said that everyone in the *Mpangu* society, especially in the rural context, is a member of the *kaanda* (clan) within which he/she establishes relationships with all the members in order to ensure the well-being and welfare of the whole. To

Figure 1:

BÉSÍ KÁÁNDA (The members of the clan)



achieve this objective, everyone has to fulfil responsibilities and duties according to the position held within kaanda.

A distinction between a member and a non-member of *kaanda* is based on the principle of matrilineal kinship. The following serves as an explanation of this phenomenon.

Figure 1 shows: ten people (2,6,8,9,16,17,21,22,24,25) who are related to *EGO* through their “mother”. They are members of one *kaanda*. Those related to *EGO* through the father have different types of kinship with him, and they are not part of his clan.

Everyone’s position within kaanda is characterised by a series of corresponding attitudes which are interpreted according to two basic principles of *KITÁÁTA* and *KIMÁÁMA*:

Kitááta (the paternal lineage) refers to all members linked on their father’s side. The numbers 11,12,18,19 represent people to whom *EGO* is related by his father (who is number 10). According to *kitááta* relationship, *EGO* is regarded at the same time as:

a mwáána (child/son/daughter), he is directly linked to 10,11,12. They are called: *tááta* (father), *táátá n’léeki* (father’s younger brother), and *táátá-n’kéénto* (father’s sister).

Indirectly, *EGO* is related as *mwáána* (child/son/daughter) to 18,19, since these people belong to his father’s *kaanda*.

b mpáángi (brother/sister), is linked to the same people 18,19; they also belong to the same generation.

Kimááma (the maternal lineage or *Kaanda*: the clan), within “*Ego*”’s position is regarded as:

a mwáana (child/son), in regard to the people represented by the numbers 6,8,9. They are called *mááma* (mother): 9; *máámá-mbuta* (mother’s elder sister): 8, and *ngwá-nkasi* (mother’s brother): 6.

b *mpáángi* (brother, sister), in regard to 21,22,16,17.

c *ngwá-nkasi* (uncle), in regard to 24,25 who are his sister's children.

Thus, there are two types of *kimpáángi* (brotherhood/sisterhood) according to the lineage. To distinguish between them, the *Mpangu* use expressions such as *mpáángi ú kítááta* (brother/sister according to the patrilineage), and *mpáángi ú kaánda* (brother/sister according to the clan or matrilineage).

In the same way a distinction is made between the two uses of the term *mwáana* (child: son or daughter). An expression such as *mwááná níma* (son/daughter from the back)³, refers to the patrilineage while *mwááná kívumu* (son/daughter from the womb) refers to *kaanda* (clan).

The same principles of *kitááta* and *kimááma* or *kaanda* characterise the relationships among the members of the visible world and those beyond, *bakúlu* (ancestors). It is important to note that the relationship with the ancestors refers only to the clan's ancestors and not to any others. Their influence is mainly expected in the areas concerned with the welfare and well-being of the visible community.

Bakulu's intervention constitutes the basic principle of authority in the *Mpangu* society. *Táá Mfúmu* (the sacred chief endowed with the power of the ancestors) for example, is chosen by *bakúlu* themselves through a dream or in some other symbolic manner. He is devoted to a special service in the community, such as the weekly ritual of cult to the ancestors, on the chosen day, according to each clan. He prays, invokes and praises *bakúlu* in order to seek the well-being and welfare for the clan. In a similar manner the healer and religious "expert" represents *bakúlu*'s authority during the rituals.

Christianity was brought to *Bakóongo* more than 500 years ago. The first Catholic missionaries from Portugal settled in the country at the end of the fifteenth century (Cuvelier and Jadin,1954).⁴ This first evangelisation of *Bakóongo* faded during the course of the seventeenth century, and a second began at the end of the nineteenth

century. In 1893, missionaries from Belgium settled in the *Mpangu* area. In 1993, a centenary of the second evangelisation was celebrated in the diocese of *Kisaantu*.

Nevertheless, in many contexts of ritual, the forms of expression used by the *Mpangu*, in society today, make no distinction between Christianity and *kinkúlu* (tradition) which refers to the custom inherited from *bakúlu* (ancestors). It includes primarily the cosmology which gives direction to the life of the individual as well as to the common life.

This can be most vividly observed in the context of certain Christian healing rituals where *Nzáambi* (God), *Yéézu* (Jesus), *Mpeeve a N'loongo* (the Holy Spirit), and *bakúlu* (ancestors) work hand in hand. They are invoked in turn by the religious “experts” such as *nganga* (priest healer), *n'vúungi* (pastor) and *ngaanga-Nzáambi* (Catholic priest), at the beginning of an important event or undertaking.

A Eucharistic ritual known as “Messe en *Rites Zairois*” (a Mass according to the Zaïrean rites) begins with an acknowledgement of *Nzáambi* (God) as creator of all things, followed by a dialogue between the leader (the priest) and the congregation who invoke Mary as Mother of God, all the saints and the ancestors:

Leader:	<i>Ku Nzáambi túna beetó kulu</i> (We all belong to God)
Congregation:	<i>Kisína ye nsuk'éto</i> (Our Origin and our End)
Leader:	<i>Saanta María, kalá ye béeto,</i> <i>Ngé Ngúdí Nzáambi, kalá ye béeto</i> <i>Wá kisaambu, kyéeto, kalá ye béeto,</i> <i>Kalá ye bááwú bóonso babatááwá miísá leelo kiki.</i> (Blessed Mary, be with us, You, the Mother of God, be with us, Hear our prayer, be with us, Be with all those who take part in the Mass today.)
Congregation:	<i>Kalá ye béeto, kalá ye bááwú bóonso</i>

(Be with us, be with all of them.)

Leader: *E béénó bánkáaka béeto, lukalá ye béeto,*
Beenó ba^{ndi} luvúmini Nzaambi yé n'tímá mímbote, lukalá
ye béeto,
Luwá kisaambu kyéto, lukalá ye béeto,
Lukalá ye bááwú bóonso babatáásala miisa leelo kiki
 (Oh you, our ancestors, be with us,
 You who, with honest hearts worshipped God, be with us,
 Hear our prayer, be with us
 Be with all those who celebrate Mass today.)

Congregation: *Lukalá ye béeto, lukalá ye bááwú bóonso.*
 (Be with us, be with all of them.)

This example is an illustration of the objective pursued in this thesis. That is, to explore the ritual elements through which the *Mpangu* religious thought is expressed in their present-day living. The leader (here the Catholic priest) and the participants, unanimously use the same expressions to address *Nzáambi* (God) and *bakúlu* (ancestors). As participants in the ritual, all of them seek communication with the members of their community in the invisible world.

Therefore, religious thought through religious expression, and hence religion, can be defined as an ensemble of concepts (embodied in symbolic and visible actions, words, attitudes, etc. ...), which enable the *Mpangu* to communicate with the invisible powers of which their cosmology is composed. Then, religion is a living experience of communication with the invisible beings. The adjective “religious” is applied to the elements which insure this relation between human beings in this world, and the inhabitants of the invisible world.

1.3. Previous Studies and the Present Contribution

My intention in this section is to locate the present study in the general field of investigation regarding healing rituals among the *Kóongo-Mpangu*.

The studies carried out by some well-known scholars such as Janzen (1978,1982,1992), MacGaffey (1990) and Devish (1993), have dealt with the phenomena of health, disease and misfortune among the people of Central Africa. Complex monographs written by Laman (1953,1957,1962,1968), as well as Buakasa (1980) in his introduction, have described how the *Bakóongo* have sought to liberate themselves from misfortune, to release and protect themselves from the influence of evil power.

Janzen, in his studies of *Lemba* (1982) and *Ngoma* (1992), sought to explore the institutional aspect of these complex rituals of healing. His objective was to determine the precise link between Ngoma, known as “ritual or drum of affliction”, and other *Bantu* institutions.

Most of the studies mentioned referred to the *Bakóongo* as an entire ethnic group. Other studies, based on a specific ethnic sub-group, have shown the similarities in the general way of thinking of the entire ethnic group, but also the various nuances in the way concepts are expressed in each group. “L’Impensé du Discours” by Buakasa (1980) has focused on the *Bandibu* and their concepts of *kindoki* (occult and ambiguous power for protection or for destruction). In his work, *n’kísi* (sacred objects endowed with invisible power) are described as the means adopted by the society to liberate individuals from evil influence.

Buakasa’s hypothesis is built around the battles which took place during the period of *Bakóongo*’s settlement on their present lands. He suggests that the founding ancestors of contemporary lineages and clans had to fight against the original occupants in taking over the lands. These indigenous people were reduced to a state of slavery or, as claimed MacGaffey (1986:25), they were assimilated into kinship status on the principle that the relationship between owner and slave was similar to that of father and son.⁵ This confiscation of land resulted in the destruction of both the society and customs of the defeated enemies. Those who fled took up residence in the forest, in the deeps, in the rivers. On the imaginary plane, the memory (although vague) of the cruelty towards these defeated “enemies” (transformed into spirits) produce anxiety, and

Bakóongo fear possible revenge from them. To preserve the new society from attack, and to ensure its prosperity, the new occupants continually seek good relationships with the spirits of their former enemies.

According to this hypothesis, respect paid to these beings, through the rituals, aims at claiming their anger and protecting the society. This is one example of how *Bakóongo* attribute misfortune to invisible beings. Buakasa (1980:295), laconically, states it: "Ce qui ne va pas au niveau de la société pourrait bien être un conflit entre un *símbi* fâché et des hommes" (What is going wrong in the society is seen as a conflict between an angry *símbi* [local spirit] and human beings). His interpretation also throws light on the ambiguity that characterises *símbi*'s relationship within the society.

Our adopted interpretation of the *bankita* phenomenon illustrates this hypothesis, for these beings are the spirits of persons who died violently during these battles. Their spirits remain alive and active. In the same way, the rituals by which human beings seek reconciliation with them must be alive and effective.

What Buakasa calls "reconciliation" with invisible beings is seen by Bockie as a search for "a harmonious return to equilibrium", that is, a balanced life resulting from good relationships established between human beings living on the earth and the invisible powers ("Death and Invisible Powers", 1993). I refer to the same phenomenon as "harmony", because healing rituals, in this thesis, are interpreted as the removal of misfortune from the clan or the individual. Healing rituals are therefore a response to a crisis.

The writings of Van Wing constitute the most extensive published sources on the *Mpangu*. They include a detailed descriptive study of historical, sociological, cultural and religious aspects of *Mpangu* society. The double objective in Van Wing's work was to demonstrate the intrinsic religious orientations of the *Mpangu* people, but also to show how far their religious practices differed from Christian practices.

Van Wing provides useful descriptions of *Mpangu* healing rituals. His comments reveal both an admiration for the people he studied (1959:343), and a missionary's concern for teaching in order to obtain conversion (ibid:381,495).

Under the umbrella of "popular Koongo religion", the dynamic aspect of life among *Bakóongo* has been stressed by MacGaffey (1983,1986). Although the implications of the past are taken into account, his studies aimed mainly at analysing religious phenomena, such as *Kimbanguism*, in the present-day society. Rituals are regarded by MacGaffey as a communicative aspect of the social process. They incarnate a way of thinking about the world and of responding to its exigencies. For him, the continuing vitality of *Bakóongo* religious expression results from the persistence of their cosmology and its entailments (MacGaffey,1986).

At the same time, rituals represent the social structure, but also are themselves social practices, the conditions of performance of which are political and economic (1986:6). Referring to *Kóongo* thought and cosmology, especially the concept of human life, MacGaffey considers rituals as the recapitulation of movement by which human life develops in space and time, from the invisible world to the visible and back to the invisible (1986:12).

V. Turner (1967, [1991]), in "The Forest of Symbols" distinguishes between two kinds of *Ndembu* rituals: life crisis, and rituals of affliction. Life crisis rituals mark a transition from one phase of life or social status to another – what Van Gennep (1960) called "rites de passage". Rituals of affliction are performed in response to misfortunes attributed to the spirits of the dead or "shades".

Turner illustrates this category of rituals with hunting cults, women's fertility cults, and curative cults. His interpretation of women's fertility cults, for example, complements Buakasa's (1988:78) view, that sterility is considered as a punishment sent by ancestors to a woman. Through symbolic and mysterious forms, the spirits make the punishment concrete. The healing ritual of *Nyóká-N'káwu* described in this thesis (3.4) is an example of this pattern of thinking.

A. Van Gennep's studies of "rites de passage" distinguish three major phases of the ritual process: separation, transition, and incorporation. These characterise constant movements of life in terms of change, death, and rebirth. The general goal of his book is to define the essential significance of rituals and their positions within ceremonial wholes (1960:191). In his view, rituals are instruments for change in the life of the community, as well as for individuals within the society.

In this thesis, healing rituals are studied as a means of understanding religious thought among the *Mpangu*. The rituals illustrate how the *Mpangu* people struggle in search of *kutómá kú lúzíngu* (harmony in life). The specific contribution of my research is to expose and elaborate religious concepts and ideas as expressed in the ritual context. My interpretation is based on published literature, field research, and my experience as a member of the same culture, and my aim is to explain these ideas "from the inside".

1.4 **Research in the Field**

A period of fieldwork research followed by an interpretation of data from the point of view of the *Mpangu* themselves constitute the basic elements of this thesis. The analysis is greatly influenced by the first hand material gathered during this period of investigation.

My fieldwork was carried out in the representative villages and agglomerations in the *Mpangu* area, in the "Sous-Region de la *Lukááya*",⁶ in which the diocese of *Kisaantu* is located. Some material in this thesis was collected in September 1973 during the performance of *Kizíku* in the village of *Makáánga*.

The time-frame for the second collection of data was six months, from February to July 1995. The main aim of this fieldwork was to record a number of healing rituals which allowed me to include song-texts as they were actually being used, and to interview local informants about the conduct of these rituals.

The rural area was chosen rather than the towns because the vitality of kinship is stronger there. People in the towns return, when necessary, to their villages to be cured, or healers are called to the town.

The hypothesis that healing rituals could be regarded, nowadays, as an expression of the religious thought of the *Mpangu* informed my fieldwork research. The adjective “religious” here refers to the relation with the invisible powers, such as *bakúlu* (ancestors), *mpeeve* (spirits), *Nzáambi* (God). Activities, attitudes, gestures, and words which facilitate this relation in terms of communication, become religious, sacred.

Healing rituals were the principal material to be recorded. I was concerned about the identity of the ritual itself; about the role and the social position of the “experts” and healers, and about various types of relationships established among the persons involved:

- the healer and the patient;
- the healer and the patient’s relatives;
- the healer and his/her own source of power.

One of the findings resulting from my fieldwork was the possibility of categorising the *Mpangu* rituals. They form two main branches, namely: the **Social Organisation Rituals** or *N’kíkú mí lúyáálu*, which focus on the government in the clan, and the **Healing Rituals** or *N’kíkú mí mbúkúlú bímbeefo*, which constitute the theme of this study. The study in this thesis is based on healing rituals exclusively. The four rituals described constitute a sample.

For the informants, *n’kiku* (rituals) more than the songs, are the permanent form of the *mpangu* culture. In other words, the activities, words, gestures, attitudes, etc., believed to be “dictated” by the ancestors and provided by the traditions, are very important. This constitutes the non-changeable aspect of a ritual. From this point of view, my concern is to analyse the constituent elements of the healing rituals, so as to define the place and the role of songs as they are used in such a ritual.

The fieldwork was organised into two series of visits to informants in their own context, their villages. My choice was guided by the notables and chiefs of the villages to whom, at the outset, I introduced my project. The first series of visits was aimed at making initial contact with the informants: healers, patients, anyone else interested in this matter. As soon as the informant agreed to collaborate with me, the interview and recording took place. Otherwise I continued to explain my project, hoping to be understood and then obtain collaboration.

I always asked the informant's permission before using apparatus such as the tape recorder and camera. The recording itself was carried out in the form of a talk with informants. Anyone else felt free to join us as we talked. Recording periods depended on the amount of information these persons were willing to give me.

The second series of visits focused on the need to confirm or to correct information already given by informants. To achieve the objective the same informant was asked the same question at different times, and different informants were asked the same question. The space between the two series of visits was about two to three months.

Concerning the recording methods, free participation was adopted. Everyone had something to share with others or to teach me. My interest in learning from them was a useful tool. In some cases, my being myself a member of the same cultural community contributed to the research process. Yet, an investigation on healing rituals carried out by a Catholic Religious was the object of fear that the healer's power could be neutralised. Actually, Catholicism is connected with the white man who brought it to African countries. Many persons believe that the white man is endowed with mysterious power which can destroy theirs. Therefore, a Catholic nun is thought to be initiated in this secret. My efforts were somewhat limited by the fact that, as an educated person, I was no longer quite one of them.

My interest in learning from them was a useful tool for overcoming this limitation. To persuade them, I used the following proverbs:

1. ***“Kidyé, mfuundi bakun’yikáánga”***
(A good eater should have more bread of manioc added.)
2. ***“Mwaaná yuula kádyáángá mbísí n’lóóngo ko”***
(A child who learns will never break a taboo.)

That is to say, I am interested in the subject we are talking about; I should be given more information than I asked for (prov.1); and, if I learn from you, I will know how to behave according to the culture (prov.2).

1.5. Transcription

Original materials recorded are transcribed in *Kikóongo* (language used for the recording) using the approved and standard orthography prescribed by the International Alphabet (one sign for one sound). Precise transcription is necessary in order to produce the reality as it is expressed by the native speakers, to underline textual variants, and to trace ritual and textual introductions from other regions.

The *Kikóongo* spoken by the *Mpangu* is also called *Kintándu*. It is made of five short vowels and five long vowels which can be represented as follows:

Short vowels

1st degree	i	u
2nd degree	e	o
3rd degree	a	

Long vowels

ii	uu
ee	oo
aa	

Ex: kufíka (to cover)	kufííka (to reward)
tútu (mouse)	túútu (bamboo)
kutéka (to sell)	kutééka (to flourish)
kulóka (to ensorceler)	kulóóka (to speak loudly)
tádi (stone)	tááta (father)

There is a semantic opposition between the short and the long vowels as shown in the first couple of examples /kufíka/ opposed to /kufííka/. The same opposition occurs between the high and lower tones, which are represented by /´/ (for the high tone) and by /\ / (for the lower tone). Only the high tone is noted in this thesis. So, /kóóko/ (arm) opposed to /kooko/ (the palm tree branch).

There are fourteen simple consonants:

p, t, k, m, n, ŋ
b, d, g,
f, s
v, z
l

These consonants can be combined with a nasal consonant.

1.6. Translation into English

A major concern in this thesis is to translate religious and therapeutic concepts as they are understood by the *Mpangu* themselves. However, certain key words and expressions are not translated into English. Rather, the *kikóongo* term is used followed by an English explanation in brackets, e.g. *kaanda* (clan).

The approach taken in this study has been influenced by the anthropological method of observation, participation and interpretation. Because the material is very rich, it has several forms and methods of expression. There are several helpful frameworks for theoretical analysis, but no single one of them can be applied which will cover all the various aspects of the expressions in this particular field of rituals. So, I select, at any given point, any framework of standard authors where it is helpful. For example, V. Turner (especially for the interpretation of symbolism), Buakasa, MacGaffey, Barth, Katz. Once again, my cultural experience as *mumpangu* is part of the method especially used for exploring the published literature.

An important methodological tool for this thesis is linguistic analysis. I shall show, when discussing the songs, keywords and verbal expressions which occur in the rituals, how the language embodies the main concepts of the *Mpangu* : harmony, communication and healing, and the secondary concepts related to them, such as expertise.

However I shall use in addition a combination of other methods, as no one single method is sufficient by itself to demonstrate *Mpangu* thought. My interpretation is based on both the published literature and my own experience, and on the linguistic analysis of the textual material used in the rituals. I am therefore an observer-participant, and the investigation is thus based on first hand material gathered during fieldwork. I shall show that the governing concept expressed in these rituals is harmony of life. Through the analysis of four types of healing rituals I intend to demonstrate how each expresses the concept.

Within the overall general field of the study of religious phenomena, the definition which best describes the *Mpangu* concept is that of communication – between spiritual entities and the living community in the visible world. Normally speaking, there is no word for religion in the *Mpangu* vocabulary. The idea is rather embodied in the performance of rituals in general, and healing rituals especially, which are organised around the basis of communication and participation.

There are obviously several difficulties involved in the study of the material. The main difficulties centre round the great difference in thinking between the *Mpangu* and Western notions of thought and religion. I have already indicated that there is no direct notion of religion, such as is found in Western descriptions and classifications. So, because the method of thinking is different, the language is different. With regard to ritual, the *Mpangu* understanding is that it is in some way a process, and so it stresses a return to the origins of things and the need to recreate them. Hence the importance of the concept of harmony and its link with cosmology in their thinking.

The later chapters of the thesis will show how ritual actions and verbal expressions reinforce and supplement these concepts. So, the healing rituals will appear as an expression of religious thought among the *Mpangu*.

NOTES

Chapter 1: Introduction

¹ Except for the King who lived at *Mbáánsá Koongo* known as *Kóóngó dí Ntóótíla* (the King's Koongo), in Angola.

² *Bantándu*: this name is derived from the *kikóongo* term */ntáándu/* (upper, on the top) as opposed to */báánda/* (lower). According to some informants, the name was first used to distinguish porters from the upper and those from the lower part of the *Kóongo* River during the period of the construction of the Kinshasa-Matadi railway, between 1882-1898 (MacGaffey, 1970:6).

³ *mwááná nima*: (child/son/daughter of the back). It is believed that the procreation power of a man is in his back. Hence the expression *nimá yifwa* (the back is dead) is used to indicate an impotent man. *mwááná kivumu*: (child/son/daughter of the womb). The expressions: *kivumu kifwa* (the womb is dead) is used to refer to female sterility.

⁴ A huge cross (six metres high and 50 centimetres wide) left by the missionaries of the first period of evangelisation was found in the area of the former province of *Mbáta*, about 150Km to the South of *Kisaantu*. In the 1970's the Bishop of the diocese prescribed an annual pilgrimage to the site now called *Mbátá-Kúlúnsi* (*Mbata* of the Cross), in order to commemorate the first evangelisation of the Bakoongo and to honour the cross. In 1993, this cross was burnt down by soldiers because various misfortunes which befell the country were attributed to it by some people. In 1995, the new Bishop renewed the pilgrimage which takes place every year at the end of August.

⁵ According to the principle of *kaanda* (clan) which is based on matrilineal foundations, the relationship between the father and the son is lived in terms of "protector" and "protected". The former slaves promoted to the state of "children" are regarded as *bááná bá nzo* (children of the house). They do not have any right within their owner's clan, because they are not part of it. Although they have been absorbed into kin groups, these persons, nevertheless, have lost their own society and customs.

⁶ Sous-Region: An administrative division of a province, equivalent to a District. *Lukááya* is the name of the river which runs through this area.

PART ONE

DESCRIPTION OF

FOUR MPA~~ANGU~~ HEALING RITUALS

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF A HEALING RITUAL: KIZÍKU

The performance of *Kizíku* described in this chapter took place in September 1973, when the members of the clan *Ntúúmba* in the village of *Makáánga* gathered to seek a solution to their community problems. The village is located about 40 kilometres from *Kisaantu*, and 160 kilometres to the South-East from Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The members of the clan came from several villages in the region, all considering his/her participation as a duty towards the clan. These participants can be divided into two categories, based on their relationship to the clan: the uterine descendants (direct members of the clan) and the affinity members (e.g. the male members' wives and also the female members' husbands). In spite of my status as a Catholic nun, I was accepted and allowed to attend the gathering because of my mother's kinship with the spokesman's wife, and of the friendship between them. I was introduced as one of them. My interest in the research focused, at that time, on the songs in general as I was writing my second degree dissertation: "Etude de quelques chansons *Kóongo-Ntándu*" (1974).

The term "*kizíku*" is a technical word in the *Mpangu* society and refers to a healing ritual. *Kizíku* is an important occasion for a gathering when the members, at all levels of the clan, seek a solution to a common problem. A big wood fire (*zíku*) is made with numerous bundles of faggots, round which the ritual is performed. "*Zíku*" is the ordinary name for any wood fire which serves for cooking or for keeping warm. "*Zíkú dí tíya*" or "*zíku*" also indicates the limited area where the wood fire is lit. The prefix "*ki-*" in *Kikóongo* language relates to both the place and the object. "*Kizíku*" (plural: "*bizíku*"), refers to the healing ritual; while "*zíku*" (plural: "*mazíku*") indicates the limited area of the wood fire.

2.1. Background and Context

Great misfortunes had befallen the clan of *Ntuumba*, in the village of *Makáanga*, which was the reason for performing *Kiziku*. Many clan members had been sick for years, women were childless, and young women waited in vain for a suitable partner. Men in the cities were unemployed and those in the village suffered a variety of misfortunes, such as crop failures, unsuccessful hunting, prolonged illnesses and frequent and sudden deaths. And then, a tragic event occurred: the sudden death of J. *Nsyaala*, an important member of the clan. After unsuccessful efforts to improve their lives in other ways, the people concluded that their misfortunes were to be attributed to *bakulu* (the ancestors) who were unhappy because the clan had been guilty of breaking rules, and so had offended them.

Actually, I was informed that there were divisions within the clan; people hated each other because, years before, *lukóbi lú bákulu* (the ancestors' basket) ¹ had been stolen from the responsibility of *ngúdí ntete* (the first lineage) also called: *ngudi mbuta* (the elder lineage) which, according to the traditions, was in charge of it. *Lukóbi lú bákulu* ensures the ancestors' presence among their people. All neglect and failures against it could provoke their anger and therefore misfortunes would follow. Such had been the situation in the clan *Ntúumba* at *Makáanga* village. It was decided to perform *Kiziku* in order to seek relief from all kinds of misfortunes, and *mu kusósa kutoma ku kaanda* (for seeking the well being of the clan). In what follows, the words in parentheses indicate the English translation or precision for *kikóongo* terms, and the paragraphs in square brackets reproduce my own comments.

2.2. Performance of Kiziku

[Late in the afternoon, participants came along different paths into the village and gathered in two separate groups: *koonso muuntu muna ngudi ani* (everyone with his/her lineage). Everyone sat next to his/her kin in the same *ngudi* (lineage), in two separate places in the yard. Persons exchanged greetings only with those in their own

ngudi. The entire atmosphere was characterised by a lack of warm friendship. Moreover, there were whispered conversations in each sub-section of the clan.

After sunset (about 6.30 p.m.) the meeting began, conducted by Antoine *NTAKU* and Pierre *MBABU*, both representatives and expert spokesmen from the two clan sub-sections, referred to subsequently as group A and B. They were chosen in advance by their own elders in each *ngudi* (lineage). Actually, before the clan was divided, Antoine was known as the spokesman for the three lineages of the clan, which is the reason why he could speak first to summon the people together. He^{then} introduced *Kinzoongi* as the first step of the ritual].

2.2.1. *Kinzoongi*

Kinzoongi is a very long and detailed discussion in order to seek a solution to communal and social problems. For the purpose of *kiziku*, *kinzoongi* took place during the first night. It helped people to come together and to make the participation possible.

[After inviting everyone to take a seat in the same area of the yard, Antoine addressed Pierre and his followers saying]:

“It is night time. According to our customs, people are expected to greet each other [when they meet], to get information about their health. Everyone is fine in our families. Slight sicknesses and discomfort are not absent, but no one has to stay in bed. Here we are in response to your convocation. Before starting the meeting we would like you to tell us whether your people enjoy good health.”

[Looking at Pierre and his people, Antoine offered him his *kúfi* (plural: *makúfi*, a special way for greeting notabilities officially in the context of the *kinzoongi*), and in order to invite him in turn to speak. The audience did the same, imitating the spokesman's attitude, also to signify their approval.

Pierre stood up and responded in the same way by offering his "*kúfi*" to acknowledge Antoine's greeting, as well as to greet him and his people. Then, he spoke very briefly in answer to the question about good health in his section of the clan. Then Antoine went on]:

Ant.: *Bayááya!* ² (Brothers/sisters, parents, relatives, friends, members of the audience).

All: Eh eh! (Yes)

Ant: I would like first to tell you a story:

"Dear brothers and sisters, we are gathered here to reflect on the story of *ZONGESI* (red-bird) and the Lord *NGO* (leopard).

When *Zóngési* built his city he named it "the City of *Ngwíísáni*" (harmony) while Lord *Ngó* built a city of *Lubáángámu* (hate). An absolute silence reigned in Lord *Ngó*'s city since citizens feared to be killed and eaten by *Ngó*, whereas in *Zóngési*'s city the talk of the citizens was full of joy.

One day, listening to the chirping from the city of *Ngwíísáni*, Lord *Ngó* decided to visit it. He went and listened to the conversation among the inhabitants: 'Brother/sister, would you give me this? What is the matter with you? What are you doing? What did you eat?' And so on.

Meanwhile in the city of *Lubáángámu* there was always a dead silence. Finally, *Ngó* decided to speak to *Zóngési* to find out why his people were so happy in the city of *Ngwíísáni*:

'Why are you so happy in this city?', he inquired. 'I have never seen any discord among you; I have never heard any arguments. You always live in joy. What is your secret?'

'The secret is that our city is called *Mbáánsá Ngwíísáni* (the city of harmony)', answered *Zóngési*.

'What do you mean by *Mbáánsá Ngwíísáni*, the "City of Harmony"?' asked *Ngó*. I have a big clan with countless members. All of us live in the forest. Every one takes care of his/her own business. What can I do to build a city of *Ngwíísáni* (harmony) as you have?'

'Dear Colleague', said *Zóngési*, 'go back to your city, beat gongs to gather your animals together. But cut your claws before calling them. Then tell them your purpose, that is, to build a city of *Ngwíísáni* (harmony), as I did.'

Ngó went back, called all the animals from the forest and shared his plan with them, and did all that *Zóngési* had told him to do. The city was built and everyone lived happily. Life changed in the city. But after a year, Lord *Ngó* began to kill and eat other animals. One day, a very healthy *nsíísi* (an animal similar to a mongoose) went [to the pond] to have a bath. Lord *Ngó* kept his eye on him, and went to hide himself behind the trees. He suddenly pounced on *nsíísi* while he was having his bath.

'What is the matter?', he asked.

'I must relieve my hunger', Lord *Ngó* replied. 'You are the first and the last to be eaten.'

'Oh! Is this the reason why you called us back into the village?'

But Lord *Ngó* could not wait: he sprang on him, killed him and ate him. In the evening, the elders noticed there was a missing member in the group of *nsíísi*. Sadly, the unfortunate wife was

looking for her husband. She informed the elders. Together they went to look for the missing member of their group. The hair and blood of the victim were noticed on the path. Finally, Lord *Ngó*'s footprints were discovered. Moreover, blood stains were still round his mouth.

'Oh! Lord *Ngó*', they asked, 'is this the reason why you called us back? From now on you can stay alone in your city.' And so, everyone ran away, leaving the leopard alone in the city.

In this way the citizens dispersed and Lord *Ngó*'s city disappeared. This is the reason why the leopard everywhere hunts animals."

[At the end of the story the participants were invited by the storyteller to establish any similarities between the story and their own situation in the clan; they were asked to discover what needed healing in their clan]:

Ant: According to your opinion, *bayáaya*, which of the two cities still exists today?

All: The Lord *Zóngési*'s city.

Ant: Which of the two cities has been dispersed?

All: The Lord *Ngó*'s city.

Ant: Which of them still exists today?

All: The Lord *Zóngési*'s city.

Ant: Let us imagine this evening that we are in the city of Lord *Zóngési*. Let us take this village of *Makáánga* as *Mbáánsá Ngwíísána* (the City of Harmony) which we aim to build.

"The reason why all of us are gathered here is not to accuse nor to condemn anyone who could have been responsible for destroying the harmony among us. I mean, our purpose is not to punish by leaving him/her alone in the village. The death of our relative, Sir J. *Nsyáála* is the purpose of our gathering. He, the owner of this *kibélu*

(part of the village), died without being sick before. All of us are witnesses. All of us were present at this same place, when he died. After the funeral, no one among us or other members of the clan was asked to consult a diviner in order to find out the cause of that death. But you, *bayááya*, according to your initiative you said: "We cannot explain why our aged relative has died. Therefore, we must go to consult a diviner". Several days afterwards, you convoked us ...

"Dyá kyo, múúntú úkúgééní kyááwu" (proverb)

(You can only eat what is given to you)

[By this proverb, Antoine wanted to emphasise the leaders' initiative in the 'B' group to convoke the people to the first meeting he referred to. Using this proverb Antoine urged them to be responsible regarding their duties. Then he continued]:

"The two answers you received from *ngaanga-ngoombo* (the diviner) were: *bakúlu* (the ancestors) and *n'kísi* (the sacred means for curing people). Actually, the *n'kísi* were brought back after you had been to consult the diviner. Then, according to the customs, what must follow *n'kísi*"?

All: *Bakúlu* (ancestors)!

Ant: Actually, *n'kísi* are rediscovered. Now we have to keep them carefully. *Ngaanga-ngoombo* confirmed that we are in possession of our *n'kísi*, but before applying them we must be wise. "Do not be foolish", he said. You all know how *Kiimpi* (madness) reacts.³ Therefore, we have first to clarify the concern about *bakúlu* ([our] ancestors). We have to wear *n'súúnga* (a bracelet made of green stalks or of the young palm tree leaves, which is an instrument for protection against evil influences). All of this is to avoid problems with *bakúlu*.

Yes, we came. We gathered here. The result was that no one either from *mbáánsa* (city), nor from *n'diimba* (valley, realm of the dead) was accused of being guilty by the diviner you had consulted. But *n'kísi* were discovered in your community. Is it not true"?

All: It is.

Ant. "At home we used to have a *kidiimbu*⁴ (symbol) we call: *bési káánda* (members of the clan). Yes, you have called our attention to our duties of *kuyáála mpu* and *kuvwáata n'suunga* (install the ancestors solemnly and wear the vegetable bracelet as a sign of union among all the members and of their belonging to the clan), *mu kusá ndé: tutomá* (in order that we could enjoy the well being and welfare). But we would like first to know where this *kidiimbu [lukóbi]* is. That symbol is the only one we have, all of us. As we know, our aged relative who died was the one who used to keep it. Is it not true"?

All: It is.

Ant: May the gongs resound!

[Each clan is normally ruled by a chief appointed by the ancestors. He can be defined as the embodiment of their power. Taking care of *lukóbi lú bákulu* (the basket of the ancestors) is among his chief responsibilities. However, in this case, the way *lukóbi* was kept seemed to be against the customs of the clan. Therefore, illnesses and misfortunes were attributed to this disorder].

Ant: Today, *bayááya*, we would like you to tell us where this "*Dibuundu di katolíka*" (Catholic Church) [something which is expected to unite the people among themselves] is now. Let us look for it. Let us look for our unity. Let us find out how it ran away. Let us know why it has been discovered on your side. This is the reason why you convoked us. Many prohibitions were imposed on the people [after the previous meeting he referred to]. Everyone was urged to respect them strictly. But your behaviour shows that you are both lawmaker as well as lawbreaker".

[The spokesman exposed the failure to conform to the prohibitions imposed. Although the prohibitions were of their own initiative, Pierre and his people did not respect them. The speaker then continued]:

"To appreciate whether what you did is good or not is not our concern today. What we want today is to build *kiyaaya-kiyááyá kyéto* (our brother/sisterhood). We think this

day is a very good one, for *Nzáambi* (God) is invisible but he is visible through deeds and signs. According to the signs we saw on our way before arriving at the village, we estimated that this day was a good one. For example: *n'fúki'* were kept in the traps; *nkáka* (pangolins) were picked up.⁶ If we had come yesterday maybe nobody would have greeted me. But today, when on my way, I met a young boy carrying a packet which contained *nkáka* (pangolin), I felt then we were welcome in the village.

Bayáaya, today is THE DAY. Do not forget the story of *Mbáánsá Ngwíísáni* (the City of Harmony) we want to build".

[He spoke then to his colleague Pierre specifying the issue of the meeting which was going on]:

"Sir Pyeedi (Pierre), according to our interpretation of the present situation, there are no *myóondo* (festering arguments and discussions between clans, about the ownership of lands), there is nothing but: *Yu ubééla kivumu yu unwáánínáánga kyeelo* (anyone who suffers from diarrhoea must run towards the door)". [In this case, the proverb can be interpreted as whoever feels the need, must look for the solution. He meant that Sir Pierre was the one who really needed to be heard by the clan during this gathering. Then he went on]:

"I know *n'kísi* (sacred means for healing) have not been discovered among the members of *n'díimba* (valley, the realm of the invisible members of the clan). We are not gathered here in order to seek our liberation after being attacked by them. The reason for our gathering here is that, as members of the visible community we are bound together. There is a *n'kísi* which belongs to all of us as members of the clan; we are all bound by it. But, for more than ten years, all our *n'kísi* have been kept in your house. Is it not true?

All: It is.

Ant: To whom must they apply if not to yourself? Are you not the one who needs to be cured by these *n'kísi*? Isn't it so?

All: It is.

Ant: Nobody else needs to be cured. On our side we do not feel this necessity, we are in a good state of health. Is it not true?

All: It is.

Ant: But, in order to protect you as well as ourselves, *ngaanga-ngoombo* (the diviner) suggested that we proceed slowly and wisely. We must involve the members of *mbáansa* (city), [land of the living] as well as those of *n'díimba* (valley), [land of the dead]. Do you agree with this"?

All: We do.

[Throughout this dialogue, Antoine urged Pierre and his people to acknowledge that it was their own initiative to consult the diviner, and to convoke the two meetings. He meant that Pierre and his people felt guilty for doing wrong in some way; that was why they convoked the meeting, but they felt uncomfortable conducting it. Then, without any transition, Antoine started singing the following song of the Twins. The participants all sang with him in solo and chorus]:

Song II, 1: *Nsiimba ye Nzuzi, báána bán'lóngo*

Solo: 1. *Nsiimba ye Nzuzi e!*

Chorus: *Báána bán'lóngo, e yááya*

2. *Lukembidilá yááya e!*

(Chorus)

3. *Báána bánsósa e!*

(Chorus)

4. *Kabilá Nsiimba, wukabila baNzuzi e!*

(Chorus)

5. *Baana béto yááya e!*

(Chorus)

6. *Yáá Nsiimba ye Nzuzi e!*

(Chorus)

7. *Kembidilá, yááya e!*

(Chorus)

Solo: 1. *Nsiimba and Nzuzi*

Chorus: Children with prohibitions

2. Give them praise, *yááya*

(Chorus)

3. It is the children we want

(Chorus)

4. Offer a gift to *Nsiimba*, offer a gift to *Nzuzi*

(Chorus)

5. Our children, *yááya*

(Chorus)

6. Dear *Nsiimba* and *Nzuzi*

(Chorus)

7. Praise them, *yááya*

(Chorus)

Ant: Ah *yááyá*!

All: Eh eh!

Ant: Do you agree with what we have said?

All: We do.

Ant: I told you today is THE DAY. Our ancestors have said these proverbs:

"Nzó, ga kátí kí gátá básáá yááwu" (A house is expected to stand in the middle of the village).

"Gó mweene mpaangi áku ukutómbókéle, n'fúnú kákúvwíidi" (When you see your relative comes to you, that means, he/she appreciates you).

"Kífwá, kíké; kisaala, kíngi". (Dead thing, worthless; lasting thing, more important).

[Speaking to Pierre's followers, Antoine continued saying]:

"Your group, *bayááyá* (relatives), has a hard time, you are suffering a great deal. Our wish is that you may get better; this applies to us too, we wish to improve our lives. We are innocent. We are here to answer your convocation. You have all the responsibility: *Nkala-nkala ye loosi mu n'nwá éno mú zítuuka* (the call for help and the clamour came from your mouth). Is it not true"?

All: It is.

[He meant that Pierre's group is the one which needs to be freed from misfortunes. The suffering of the members in the group is interpreted as a punishment from the ancestors for breaking the law of the clan. The meaning of the proverb he employed is similar to: "If the cap fits you, wear it"].

Ant: Actually, both *n'kísi* (sacred means for healing) and *bakúlu* (ancestors) are in your hands. We only want to find out what happened to *kidiimbu* (the symbol, [*lukóbi*]) we had. All of us are here. If you have a message for us, speak. The noble chiefs and participants who attended our first meeting are also sitting here. They came back to have some idea about the issue that concerns the clan of the village of *Makáánga*. Anything you wish to tell us, please do it. That is all we want to say.

Gó kóó ya? (If you hear: *kóó ya*)

All: *Diswééme!* (It is over; this is the end).

[Then, joined by his followers, he sang the following song]:

Song II, 2: *Móó úgógáá ngéye ...*

Solo:1. *Móó úgógáá ngéye ma iwáánga* Chorus: *Ma ugógáá ngéye ma iwáánga e*
Dyaambu ngé kúsóníkáá ko. *Dyaaná ngé kúsóníkáá ko*

2. *Ma ugógáá ngéye ma iwáánga*
Dyaambu ngé kútómísáá ko (Chorus)

3. *E maambu ma ugógáá ngéye ma iwáánga*
Dyaaná ngé kútómísáá ko (Chorus)

4. ... [no voice but clapping]
Dyaaná ngé kútómísáá ko (Chorus)

5. *E ngwá, má úgógáá ngéye ma i ...*
Dyaaná ... [no voice but clapping] (Chorus)

Solo:1. I can hear what you say Chorus: I can hear what you say
But you do not write it. But you do not write it

2. I can hear what you say (Chorus)
You are the ones who do not improve

3. I can hear the issues you say (Chorus)
You are the ones who do not improve

4. ... [no voice but clapping] (Chorus)
You are one who does not improve.

5. Oh mother! I ... what you say
... [no voice but clapping] (Chorus)

But ...

[After a period of singing, a concluding dialogue between Antoine and his group took place]:

Ant: *Bayááya!*

All: Eh! (Yes)

Ant: Is there any problem?

All: There is no problem!

Ant: *Keembo dí n'kisi ...* (The celebrity of *n'kisi* [is known] ...)

All: *Ngaanga kimooya!* (During its owner's life time).

Ant: Is it acceptable that anyone should not understand a saying addressed to them?

All: It is not acceptable!

[Then came Pierre's turn to speak. He thanked Antoine, he explained his group's point of view and referred to a couple of objectionable points in Antoine's speech. He felt mainly unhappy because his group was treated as "*báántú bánsuumba*" (sold and bought people). An adjustment was made by Antoine to assure Pyeedi and his group. Then everyone was invited to ask for forgiveness for any harmful words and acts which might have hurt any member in the clan. He sang and asked people to join him]:

Song II, 3: *N'keenda kani wunsoni wuna ...*

1. *E e n'keenda káni wúnsóní wúna*

Taat'kuwá kwáni e

(Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. *E e n'keenda káni wúnsóní wúna*

Maamá kuwá kwáni e

(Chorus: repeat 2.)

1. Even if it is a story of shame

The father agrees to listen

(Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. Even if it is a story of shame

The mother agrees to listen

(Chorus: repeat 2.)

Ant: Now we do not hide anything.

Eh *yááya!*

All: Eh eh (Yes).



[Without any transition, he sang another song]:

(Without any transition, he sang)

Song II, 4: *Móó maambu e*

Solo:1. *Móó maambu e, ntámá máyála*

Yáávoní úsíísá mo'

(Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. *Móó maambu e, ntámá máyála*

Ye bámbuta básíísá mo e

(Chorus)

3. *Móó maambu e, ntámá máyála*

Mfumú Voni úsíísá mo e

(Chorus)

4. *Móó maambu e, ntámá máyála*

A bambutá bátúyita básíísá mo e

(Chorus)

5. *Móó maambu e,*

Bóó báyita koko, ntámá básíísá mo e

(Chorus)

6. *Móó maambu e,*

Bóó bábutúkídi búngángi bazééyé mo e

Solo:1. These complaints have existed for a long time

Even elder Yvon left them behind

(Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. These complaints have existed for a long time

Our elders left them behind

(Chorus)

3. These complaints have existed for a long time

Father Yvon left them behind

(Chorus)

4. These complaints have existed for a long time

The elders who preceded us left them behind

(Chorus)

5. These complaints,

Those departed before us, left them for a long time (Chorus)

6. These complaints

The newborns know them now



[These were complaints within Sir Pierre's group. Elders and leaders were accused of the bad way they treated their members. Then, Antoine and his group urged Pierre to answer these objections. They sang]:

Song II, 5: *Ngaatú ndé: ...*

1. *Ngaatú ndé, ngaatú ndé:*
Yááni yoyo e!
 2. *Taatá goga máámbú máku, ngaatú ndé:*
Yááni yoyo e!
-
1. One can say perhaps, one can say perhaps:
It is his/her fault
 2. Father, speak freely, one can say perhaps:
It is his/her fault

[Antoine went on to insist that Pierre must be careful, he must only tell the truth. He expressed this by singing]:

Song II, 6: *Ga n'totó mbaangi ...*

Ga n'totó mbaangi
Mu zulú mbaangi
Mamoonso ma tugáánga
Mfumu Nzáámbi zééyé mo

[There are] witnesses on the earth
[There are] witnesses in heaven
Anything we do
The Lord God knows it

[There were elements of Sir Pierre's speech rejected by Antoine and his followers. At this stage of *kinzoonzi*, songs replaced discourses; the debate developed through the songs. This is an example of the dynamism of songs in a ritual. The specific message of the song was interpreted and orientated the debate. By singing the song: *Wéédí yé mááwu*, Antoine assessed Pierre's speech. He did not appreciate it because some important points for debate were neglected. The song simply meant that Pierre did not answer questions; therefore, *kinzoonzi* is not ended.]

Song II, 7: *Wéédí yé mááwu*

1. *Wéédí yé mááwu, yááya e, e e yááya e!*
2. *Kyedíka wéédí yé mááwu, yááya e, e e yááya e!*
3. *E bu ukwéénda, weédí yé mááwu, yááyua e, e e yááya!*
4. *E bu úvútúka, vutuká yé mááwu yááya e, e e yááya e!*
5. *Yáá Mbábu bú kéélé yé mááwu yááya e, e e yááya e!*

1. You go away with [problems] on your back
2. Truly, you go away with [problems] on your back
3. As you leave, you go away with [problems] on your back
4. As you return, you return with [problems] on your back
5. *Yáá Mbábu* goes away with [problems] on his back

[Although Pierre made efforts to improve his speech, Antoine estimated it not effective, a failure. That is why he regretted that the clan of the village of *Makáánga* was no longer represented by an outstanding expert spokesman]:

Song II, 8: *Ku Makáángá kúkála nzoongi*

1. *E ku Makáángá kúkála nzoongi*
Kuyíká kwáni bimvwebedi e!
2. *Mu Makáángá múkála baantu e*

Muyíkákwaní biyunga, yááya e!

1. There were expert spokesmen at *Makáánga*
Now, there are people who do not think deeply
2. There were famous people at *Makáánga*
Now, there are unwise people

[Finally, Pierre went on again to explain his point of view to which Antoine, satisfied, replied by singing: *Kyeesi kí izóláánga* (joy is what I like, which concluded the first night of the meeting)].

Song II, 9: *Kyeesi kí izóláá*

E e kyeesi kí izóláá

Mavwaanga si kizóláá mó ko

Joy is what I like

I do not like confusion

[The two verses were sung several times by the assembled group. At sunrise the meeting concluded. During the day people were free to rest, to relax. In the afternoon, a group of women (those considered as *báána* in the clan), was in charge to provide firewood for *Kizíku* which would take place during the night].

2.2.2. *Kizíku*

[The second night was reserved for the healing ritual of *Kizíku* which was conducted by two religious figures who belonged to another clan: *Táá Mfúmu* (the sacred chief endowed with the ancestors' power) and his assistant *Táá Ngáánga* (the healer).⁸

After sunset people gathered again in the same place to continue their meeting. *Táá Mfúmu* and *Táá Ngáánga* arrived in the evening. They were introduced by Antoine,

the spokesman. They sat in the middle where everybody could see them, facing the assembly.

Kiziku is divided into three phases:

- *Mbóóka* (Invocations)
- *Kaangu ye kúbuka* (Covenant and healing process)
- *Matóóndo* (Thanksgiving)

A. *Mbóóka* (Invocations)

Then, all the assembly conducted by *Táá Ngáánga* formed a circle in the open space. They danced accompanied by a drum [he played himself] and songs sung in a call and response style. Dancers moved around clapping; they followed *Táá Ngáánga*'s rhythm while they sang: *Ku mayeenga* (in/from the deeps). This song was used for calling upon *bakúlu* (ancestors) and attracting their attention:

Song II, 10: *Nsiimbá ye Nzuzi, ku mayeenga ...*

Solo:1. *E Nsiimbá ye Nzuzi e*

Ku mayeenga keti tóló lúléédi? ⁹

Munú kiléédi ko

Máá N'tóómbo munu toombulá mpoongo (Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. *E Nsiimbá ye Nzuzi e*

Ku mayeenga keti tóló lúléédi? ¹⁰

Munú kiléédi ko

Máá N'tóómbo e, toombukáánga (Chorus: repeat 2)

3. *E Nsiimbá ye Nzuzi e*

Ku mayeenga keti mbílá lúntéledi?

Munú kiléédi ko

Máá N'tóómbo e, toombulá mpoongo (Chorus: repeat 3.)

Solo:1. Oh *Nsiimbá* and *Nzuzi*

In the deeps, are you sleeping?

I, I do not sleep

Oh mother *N'tóómbó*, take out the *mpoongo*!¹¹ (Chorus: repeat 1.)

2. Oh *Nsiimbá* and *Nzuzi*

In the deeps, are you sleeping?

I, I do not sleep

Oh mother *N'toombó*, come out! (Chorus: repeat 2)

3. Oh *Nsiimbá* and *Nzuzi*

In the deeps are you calling me?

I, I do not sleep

Mother *N'tóómbó*, take out the *mpoongo*! (Chorus: repeat 3)

[The dancing stopped here, a loud and shouted dialogue began between *Táá Ngáánga* and the participants]:

Ng: I am calling! Who can I call? I am calling!

I am *Ngúmbí Mákáánda*!¹²

All: *Ye Mbaka*!¹³

Ng: I am calling! I am *Kyáándú kí Mátátámá kí Nzéénzé Báántu*! *Ndúúndu ...*

All: *Ye Mbaka*!

Ng: I am calling! Who can I call?

I am a descendant of *Matá má Koongo*

I bow down; look at this [he bowed down]! *Ndúúndu ...*

All: *Yé Mbaka*!

Ng: Oh, *Kiimpi! Kiimpi! Kiimpi! Kiimpi n'kísí kíláwu*!

(*Kiimpi* is n'kísí for madness)

[Give me] three nuts of kola. *Ndúúndu ...*

All: *Ye Mbaka*!

Ng: [Give me] three nuts of kola. *Ndúúndu ...*

All: *Ye Mbaka*!

Ng: Those who are not happy ... *Ndúúndu ...*

All: *Ye Mbaka*!

Ng: Those who want to control us ... *Ndúúndu* ...
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: [Today] we, we are in position of control! *Ndúúndu* ...
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: They are regarded as the animals! *Ndúúndu* ...
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: I bow down [give me] three nuts of kola! *Ndúúndu* ...
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: We wish to go back where we came from. *Ndúúndu* ...
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: We shall go! *Ndúúndu* ... [3 times]
 All: *Ye Mbaka!*
 Ng: Eh! *Zábálá zabala!* ¹⁴

[He fell to the ground and remained quiet for a period. When he stood up, the dance took place again with the following song:

Song II,11: *Táá Ngáánga*

Solo:1. *E e e Táá Ngáánga, lusala lú Nkuka e!*

Chorus: *E e e Táá Ngáánga, lusala lú Nkuka e!*

2. *Mááma a, si ikwééndá kwámo ganá mpáámbú nkama!*
3. *Mááma a, ngwá múnu ngyeelé kwámu mu n'kaandá mfuka!*
4. *Mááma a, ngwá múnu ngyeelé kwámo mu n'kandá Nkuka*
5. *Táá Ngáánga a, nkita Kiimpi, n'kisi kilawu e e*
Ngaanga a, ngwa munu ngyeele kwamo mu n'kisi kilawu e
6. *E e e Táá Ngáánga, lusala lú nkuka e, Kiimpi a a*
Mááma, nkita Kiimpi, n'sisi kilawu
7. *E e e Táá Ngáánga, n'keenda nsoni e, mbádí yááya e!*
Taata Ngáánga wakadila ku ntaandú nkuka



The contents of *lukóbi*: metal and vegetal bracelets, and various remains of deceased chief wrapped in a cloth parcel. (June 1995 at *Leemfu*).

Solo:1. Oh, father *Ngáánga*, the feather of *Nkuka*¹⁵

Chorus: Oh, father *Ngáánga*, the feather of *Nkuka*

2. Oh, mother I am going to be judged
3. Oh, mother, I am a victim due to a debt
4. Oh, mother, I am a victim due to a *Nkuka*
5. Father *Ngaanga*, *Kiimpi* is a madness
Oh, *ngáánga*, I am a victim of madness
6. Oh father *Ngáánga*, the feather of *nkuka*, oh *Kiimpi*!
Oh, mother, *nkita Kiimpi* is a *n'kisi* of madness
7. Oh, father *Ngáánga*, this is a story of shame, alas
Father *Ngáánga* stands upstream upper waters

[To conclude this part several songs were sung as accompaniment to the dance. Then three men were sent to fetch *lukobi lu bákulú* (the ancestors' basket). Meanwhile people waited several hours in the yard. There was an exceptional gladness among the people when the three men, bringing back *lukóbi*, reached the yard. Women made *biyéki-yeki* (joyful cries), men fired shots in the air. The three men, kneeling, moved toward *Táá Mfúmu* and *Táá Ngáánga* who received *lukóbi*.]

B. *Kaangu ye kúbuka* (Covenant and Healing Process)

[Then came the moment for *kusíba*¹⁶ (to warn people before establishing any covenant) and *kubúka* (to heal). Before all of this took place, the spokesman Antoine attracted the attention of the participants by singing and dancing. By that he meant that the moment was a very important one. He sang]:

Song II,12: *Ntaangu maambu yifwééni*

Solo: 1. *E ngwá ntaangu maambu yifwééni e!*

Chorus: *E yááyá Kuma e!*

2. *E lukebá, yintaangu yifwééni e!*

Solo: 1. It is time for acting

Chorus: *E yááyá Kuma e!*

2. Be careful, it is time for acting

All: *Ka mánángáá ko!*

(It does not last)

[A male goat was brought into the circle. Two men pierced its throat and collected the blood. Meat was roasted in small pieces, everyone received a portion and ate it during that same night. The blood mixed with kaolin and fresh water from a spring, served first for the covenant [bracelets and leg-rings contained in *lukóbi* and by which *bakúlu* (the ancestors) are represented, had been immersed], then as a substance used in the healing action and blessing. *Táá Mfúmu* mixed the bracelets together in *lukóbi* in such a way that they could hold together as a sign of membership of a united clan. Meanwhile, each lineage invoked its ancestors.

Invited by *Táá Mfúmu* every patient explained his/her pain or misfortunes. There were various complaints such as childlessness, crop failures for years, unemployment for young men, failure to marry among young girls and so forth. A woman who had an incurable sore in the neck went in the middle of the gathering, she uncovered it and revealed a large and awful sore. She explained that she spent money and time trying to get cured. She also prayed to the ancestors to forgive her if she had offended them. But she did not explain the cause of this incurable sore; she did not know it.

For the healing action, *Táá Mfúmu* proceeded as follows: those who had revealed their pains sat on the ground in the middle of the circle. *Táá Mfúmu* went from one to another, carrying the kaolin and goat's blood mixture which he applied on the face, the arms, the legs and the special parts of the body indicated by the patients. Each patient was given a plait, made of fresh grass stalks, to be worn as a bracelet, an anklet or as a necklace.

While *Táá Mfúmu* proceeded to cure and bless the participants, *Táá Ngáánga* directed the assembly to sing the song for healing: *Léémbí-leembi*:¹⁷

Song II,13: *Léémbí-leembi*

Solo: 1. *E e léémbí-leembi e*

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| <i>Makaanda tukwééleembi e</i> | (Chorus: repeat 1.) |
| 2. <i>Makaanda tukwééboondi e</i> | (Chorus: repeat 2.) |
| 3. <i>Ngwa baantú tukwéétómisa e</i> | (Chorus 1) |
| 4. <i>Bandwééló tukwééyídika e</i> | (Chorus 1) |
| 5. <i>Bankíta baantu tukwééleembi e</i> | (Chorus 1) |
| 6. <i>E ngwa bááná tukwééboondi e</i> | (Chorus 1) |
| 7. <i>E ngwa mbóongo tukwéétómisa e</i> | (Chorus 1) |

Solo: 1. Oh, *leembi-leembi*

- We [try] to appease the clans
2. We [try to] heal our clans
3. We [try to] improve human life
4. We [try to] prepare the future for the little ones
5. we [try to] appease these people
6. Oh, mother, we [try to] heal the children
7. Oh mother, we [try to] improve our progeny

[As soon as *Táá Mfúmu* finished healing and blessing people, *Kizíku* was performed: many fagots were placed together, in advance, in the middle of the yard. They were set on fire by *Táá Ngáánga* while he pronounced incantations and danced around the fire. He invited people to do the same. The drum was played by himself in a way that the beats became gradually more rapid until they became frenzied. The dance was performed according to this rhythm. One of the songs sung during the dance was]:

Song II,14: Máá N'tóombo toombuká (Mother N'tóombo, come out)¹⁸

- Chorus: *Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúntala, e yááya e*
Ku túsáálá bééto, manzála ga laká, e yááya e
- Solo: 1. *E bikulu bisímbi kaanda manzála ga laká, e yááya e*
É ngwa ku túsáálá bééto, manzála ga laká, e yááya e (Chorus).
2. *E bikulu bisímbi kaanda manzála ga laká, e mááma e*
Ga kifulu ki loongo, manzála ga laká (Chorus)
3. *É mááma, ga kifulu ki loongo, manzála ga laká, e yááya*
É ngwá yáá Nsáángu uyiká n'kulu (Chorus).
4. *E máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbuka, e yááya e* (Chorus)
5. *Ga kifulu ki kaanda, manzála ga laká, e yááya e*
Ngwá máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúntala, e yááya e (Chorus)
6. *Ga kifulu ki kanda, manzála ga laká, e yááya e*
É mááma, máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbaka, e mááma (Chorus)
7. *Beetu máá N'tóombo tómbokele, ndíngá mbótí káwíídi e* (Chorus)
8. *E máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúntala, e yááya e*
Ku túsáálá bééto, kikéyá kíkaya, e yááya (Chorus)
9. *Ku túsáálá bééto, manzála ga laká, e yááya e*
Ga kifulu ki kaanda, bungúdí búnga^{ka}tu, e yááya e (Chorus)
10. *Kutúsáálá bééto, kikéyá, ^{kíkaya} e yááya e*
Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbaka, e yááya e (Chorus)
11. *Máá N'tóombo tómbokele, ndíngá mbótí káwíídi e*
Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbaka, e yááya e (Chorus)
12. *Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbaka, e yááya e*
É ngwa ku lútuúká bééno, kikéyá kíkaya (Chorus)
13. *Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbona, e yááya e*
Máá N'tóombo, toombuká, nzála ga laká, e yááya e (Chorus)
14. *Máá N'tóombo, toombuká wisi kúmbona, e yááya e*
Ngwá wó n'kaangu bééto, manzála ga laká, e yááya (Chorus)

- Chorus: Mother *N'toombo*, come out to visit me, oh *yááya*
There where you left us we are strangled
- Solo: 1. The elders of the clan strangle us, oh *yááya*
Oh, mother, there where you left us we are strangled (Chorus).
2. The elders of the clan strangle us, oh mother
Instead of the [relationship of] marriage, we are strangled (Chorus)
3. Oh, mother, instead of marriage, we are strangled
Oh, *yáá Nsáángu* became an ancestor (Chorus).
4. Oh, mother *N'tóombo*, come out to heal me, *yááya* (Chorus)
5. Instead of the clan, we are strangled, *yááya*
Mother *N'tóombo*, come out to visit me, *yááya* (Chorus)
6. Instead of the clan, we are strangled, oh *yááya*
Oh, mother, mother *N'tóombo*, come out to take me, oh mother mother
(Chorus)
7. Here we are, mother *N'tóombo* came out since she heard a gentle voice
(Chorus)
8. Oh mother, *N'tóombo*, come out to visit me, *yááya*
There where you left us there are endless grievances (Chorus)
9. There where you left us we are strangled, *yááya*
Instead of the clan, they only pay lip service to the
motherhood/sisterhood/brotherhood, oh *yááya* (Chorus)
10. There where you left us there are endless grievances
Mother *N'tóombo*, come out to take me, oh *yááya* (Chorus)
11. Mother *N'tóombo* came out since she heard a gentle voice
Mother *N'tóombo*, come out to take me, *yááya* (Chorus)
12. Mother *N'toombo*, come out t take me, oh *yááya*
Oh, mother, where you come from there are endless grievances (Chorus)
13. Mother *N'toombo*, come out to see me, oh *yááya*
Mother *N'tóombo*, come out we are strangled (Chorus)
14. Mother *N'toombo*, come out to see me, oh *yááya*
We are strangled by [people of] our generation, oh *yááya* (Chorus)

[Suddenly, one of the women dancers started *kutuuntuka* (trance). She screamed loudly and left the line of the dancers, and went in the middle of the circle. She continued to dance but her rhythm differed from the others. People asked her: "Who are you? Do you have any message for us?" She answered: "I am mother So and So. *N'kúúngá myénó ngwíídi, bú ngísí kíná kwámo ye bééno. K'ina kwámo ye nsáángu ko; n'kúúngá myéno myóó m'indéti gogo!*" (I heard your songs, that is why I came to dance with you. I do not have a message; it is because of your songs that I am here).

Afterwards she was asked questions by the participants to know whether the ancestors agreed with the way things were handled during the meeting. She replied: "*Ku masá u kyéésí kwétó túna. N'kúúngá myénó ngwíídi, bú ngísí kíná kwámo ye bééno*" (We are glad in the water. I heard your songs, that is why I came to dance with you). Then she crossed the fire and went near the forest, she took a young palm leaf and chewed it. She returned to the middle of the circle, danced a while, then, gave a piercing cry and fell to the ground as if she were dead. (Everyone understood that the ancestor had left the body of the human being). She was picked up and taken outside the area reserved for the dance and laid on a mat until late in the morning. When she woke up she did not remember what had happened to her in the night. She wondered why she was so dirty, but nobody wanted to speak to her about the trance].

C. *Matóóndo* (Thanksgiving)

[As soon as the woman in trance fell down and slept, there were expressions of gladness and satisfaction among participants. People sang and danced to express joy and thanks to the ancestors for they agreed with the way the ritual was handled, they "came back" by taking possession of the living, and in so doing, they participated in the ritual.

The dance continued while *Táá Ngáángá* threw a chicken into the fire to be roasted. Then all the participants received a small portion and ate it. Small pieces of a kola nut were also distributed to be eaten by the participants.

At sunrise the dance ended and the assembly dispersed. Everyone was ready to go back home].

2.3. Reading the Ritual of *Kiziku*: Towards an Interpretation

The double goals in telling the story about the celebration of *Kiziku*, in the previous section, are to give an idea about the performance of *Kiziku* and to provide us with basic reconstructed material for further study. In this section, my attention will focus on the elements which ~~constitute~~ constitute this healing ritual, in order to establish its structure. In so doing, I intend to define various roles played by *Kiziku* in the *Mpangu* society.

As described above, *Kiziku* seems to be a complex healing ritual composed of elements taken from several other healing rituals. There is an amalgam of elements borrowed from various cultural contexts. These elements are parts of *Kiziku* and play various roles.

The ritual, as described in section 1, can be divided into elements which are not only part of it, but also ensure the dynamic development. They constitute specific stages through which the healing ritual moves. These are:

A. *Kinzoongi* (a long discussion about an important issue). It is a kind of public court held by the elders in order to find a solution to a specific important problem. In the context of *Kiziku*, this was a period for an individual and communal preparation for the performance of the healing ritual.

B. *Kiziku* itself which is composed of:

Mbóoka(calls, invocations). A special moment during the ritual when the participants call upon their ancestors to come out and join the visible section of the clan as it seeks a solution to a specific problem.

Kaangu ye kúbuka (covenant and healing action). At this stage, the participants in the ritual, consciously take part, committing themselves to the conditions required for being healed.

Matóóndo (thanksgiving). A conclusion of the ritual, here the people express joy and thanks to their ancestors for helping the clan on this particular occasion.

In the following pages, these elements will be described in more details in order to underline their specific role in the healing ritual of *Kizíku*.

The interpretation of *Kizíku* can only make sense in the context of *kaanda* (the clan) which is the point of departure for any important socio-religious action among the *Mpangu*. My informants confirmed that this healing ritual is performed in response to a crisis situation within the community *kaanda*, e.g. illnesses, deaths and all kinds of misfortunes. This was the case for the clan in the village of *Makáánga* as was underlined by Antoine, one of the spokesmen who led *kinzoonzi*. He said:

*“Beno bayááya, kimpasi-mpasi kíngi. Tuzoledí beenó
lutomá; a beetó mpi tutomá”.*

(You, [our] relatives, have a hard time, you are suffering a great deal. Our wish is that you may get better; this applied to us too).

By these words Antoine meant that one *ngúdi* (a lineage) of the clan, which was represented by the group “B” was in a bad state. Its people were the victims of many misfortunes. Therefore it was the duty of all the members in the clan to look for an improvement in their lives. That was the reason for gathering the clan for *kinzoonzi* on that occasion.

2.3.1. *Kinzoonzi*

As defined by an informant, *kinzoonzi* “C’est le fait que toute la famille (clan) prend conscience, sous l’autorité du chef de famille, se réunit pour examiner un problème et trouver la solution” (The fact is that, led by the chief of the clan, the entire community becomes aware [of a specific situation] and comes together to analyse the problem and

find the solution). It is a kind of public court held by the notables and elders of the clan, in order to resolve a specific communal problem.¹⁹

The style of *kinzoonzi* varies according to the purpose sought in each case. Therefore, there are several sorts of *kinzoonzi* according to the problem which disturbs or might disturb the harmony of life in the clan, or any kind of community. An Appendix gives a description of several examples of *kinzoonzi* as interpreted by the informant mentioned above.

2.3.2. *Mbóóka* (Calls, invocations)

Although the entire ritual of *Kiziku* can be interpreted as a long series of calls and invocations to the ancestors, this section will especially examine the role of *mbóóka* (calls, invocations) in the context of the healing ritual being considered.

The term *mbóóka* is a noun derived from the radical verbal [-bo:k-] of which the infinitive form is /*kubóóka*/ or /*kubookila*/ (to shout a message, to call) e.g. *kubóóoka/kubookila n'samú* (to shout a message, some news). The term is also used for a call addressed to a person. This is what *Táá Ngáánga* (the healer) meant, when he said: "*Yibooka, yibooká nani?*" (I am calling, who can I call?) He could also have said "*Yibookila, yibookilá nani?*" when he addressed the ancestors during the healing ritual of *Kiziku*. He intended to call the ancestors to join the members of the clan in the visible world, as they were seeking a solution to their problems.

There are two reasons for calling upon the ancestors during the healing ritual. The first is to facilitate communication between all the members of the clan, be they living in this land or in the realm of the dead. The fact of calling upon their common ancestors contributes to creating a united body among the participants as they look forward to performing *Kiziku*.

As we know, in the *Mpangu* society, the clan is composed of the visible beings: *baantu* (human beings) and of the invisible beings, the deceased members known as *bakúlu* (the ancestors). The latter are regarded as the guardians of the clan. *Kiziku* is

an important event in the life of the clan. Therefore, before performing the ritual, all the members of the clan must be united to ensure its success.

Unity is a major concern of the clan throughout this healing ritual. The spokesman expressed it when he said: "*Tuyitá maambu ma bákulu. Tuvwaata n'suunga; kadi mu bakulú muna maké ye meengi*" (We must, first, clarify the concern about the ancestors. We must wear the hay bracelet [which unites us to the ancestors] so that we avoid problems with them).

The second reason is that the ancestors are thought to be powerful and endowed with a supernatural knowledge which the clan needs to resolve its problems. The members of the visible world cannot make any arrangement for the clan without calling upon the ancestors, both for help and mainly to honour them as elders and owners of the clan.

The *Mpangu* consider *mbóoka* as a call upon the ancestors. It is expected to be heard and answered. Call and answer come almost simultaneously in the shouted dialogue between *Táá Ngáánga* (the healer) and the participants:

I am calling! Who can I call? I am calling!

Here *Táá Ngáánga* speaks on behalf of the entire *kaanda* (the clan) gathered to seek a solution to its problems. The representative ancestors respond, one after another, to the call, and come to join the participants in the ritual. They introduce themselves through *Táá Ngáánga* as he pronounces their names:

I am *Ngímbí Mákáánda*

I am *Kyáándú kí Mátátámá kí Nzéénzé Báántu*

I am a descendant of *Matá má Koongo*.

The conviction that a call has been heard and answered by the ancestors is indispensable for the success of the ritual. The efficacy can be measured by the way *bakúlu* reacted to the call. In the ritual of *Kizíku* nothing can be achieved without the guiding participation of *bakúlu* (the ancestors) since they hold the key position in the ritual.

Bakúlu are regarded as *bambúta* (the elders), not only because they lived and died before the present members of the clan, but also because they are still lineal elders. They bear the responsibility for *kutómá kú káánda* (the well being and welfare of the clan) and ensure *ngwiísání* (the harmony).

The call addressed to *bakúlu* (the ancestors) follows the rule of the composition of the clan. The members must address their calls to the ancestors of the same clan or lineage, as it is expressed in the song *Saamba n'kúlú áku, kusáámbí n'kúlú n'kwéénó ko* (invoke your own ancestor, do not invoke your neighbour's ancestor) sung when the ritual of *kaangu* (the covenant) takes place.

In the *Mpangu* society, recourse to the ancestors extends to many circumstances of life both for a person as an individual and for the entire community. In his studies on *Bakóongo*, Van Wing (1959) describes some important areas in which the intervention of *bakúlu* (the ancestors) is sought by the people. For him, the reason why the recourse takes place is that, according to the common belief, *bakúlu* (the ancestors) possess "*n'fúnu ye n'gaku*" (all useful things and fecundity). They are also able to bestow their gifts on the people. A couple of examples can illustrate this belief.

The first example is related to the great concern of the *Mpangu* hunters to be in communion with their ancestors before undertaking an important hunting expedition. The term "communion" is here interpreted in terms of common sharing, participation among persons involved in the same pursuit. In other words, it is a kind of exchange of thoughts and emotions, as shown in the case of invocations to call the ancestors to join the human beings as they accomplish an important action. The call is an invitation to *bakúlu* (the ancestors) to take part in the same action. The ritual reported by Van Wing is performed as follows: Men go to the cemeteries. The chief [of the village or of the land in which the hunting expedition would take place] pours palm wine over each tomb. He kneels and says:

Oh, fathers, oh, mothers, oh, elders,
 Come, come and drink wine,
 Grant fecundity and human richness.
 The reason which leads us to present this wine to you,
 Is that we ask you to grant us game with hooves and claws.
 In other clans, big game is shot,
 In ours, only small [animals].
 But today, drink and see:
 We go hunting,
 Bring out big game,
 Do not retain it [with you]. (Van Wing, 1959:323).

The call is addressed to all their own ancestors who share life within the same community: *batááta* (fathers), *bamááma* (mothers), *bambúta* (elders). Calling upon the ancestors is also used in the context of cursing. When a relative is not satisfied with the way the sharing is made after hunting, he/she may curse the forest in order to make it barren. He/she goes to the graveyard of the ancestors of the clan and says:

Oh! Ancestors, listen to me!
 We have inherited the forest from you, haven't we?
 If it does not belong to all of us,
 Then, they (relatives) could eat the meat²⁰
 Contrary, if the forest belongs to all of us,
 Then, you, ancestors, listen to me:
 Retain your animals in the forest
 [Do not give them to the hunters] (Van Wing, 1959:324).

According to common belief, any hunting expedition undertaken in such a forest would fail, since the forest has been inherited from the ancestors for the welfare of all the members of the community.

The second example deals with *kínzoonzi ki magógila* (meeting for intercessions on behalf of a sick relative), described in Appendix. If, after hearing the relatives' confessions [in case there are tensions among them], the sick person does not feel better, the case would be entrusted to the ancestors. They would be called in the context of a ritual of *magógila*, which is known in Van Wing's studies as *matábúla* (release). Actually, this is the final stage of the ritual of *magógila* whose aim is to speak (*kugóga*) on behalf of the sick person, in order to obtain healing. *Kugogila* is the applicative

form, that is, to speak for someone else. The ultimate goal of *magógila* is to free the victim from all kinds of evil bondage. This is what the term *matábúla* literally means: to cut [a cord].²¹

The following story which I was told by a woman is another illustration of the intervention of the ancestors:

In 1945 her seven year old daughter suffered from continual hallucinations during the night, for months. Although she brought her to the hospital, there was no improvement. The sick girl could describe to her mother figures which scared her during the night. The mother recognised her own aunt F.V., her *táátá-n'kéénto* (her father's sister). Early in the morning, the mother went to summon her aunt to release the daughter. She said that she would only leave her aunt's house when she was certain that the daughter was released. The aunt promised to fetch appropriate leaves from the forest in order to heal the sick girl. On her way to the forest, she crossed several graveyards of her ancestors. As soon as she reached each, she knelt and introduced herself, saying:

*"Bamfumu ye bándóóna, bambúta ye bálééki, lungwíla,
I munu ndóóná Mbáámbe-Kaluunga yú
Ngiisidí mu kululoombá lukutula mwaná ngani,
Ba bavwídi mwaan'áwu ka bazoléle ko".*

(Chiefs and ladies, elders and young people, hear me,
Here I am, a female descendant of the clan of Mbáámbe-Kaluunga.
I come asking you to release the little girl
Her owners do not agree with [the death].)

After saying this she clapped and went on her way. She did not notice that the sick girl's mother was following behind. At the end, she entered the forest to fetch leaves. On her return to the village she handed them over to the sick girl's mother to be taken

by her daughter. After a few days, the little girl felt better, and she left the hospital. She was healed.²²

Commenting on the event, this woman said that it was not the action of the leaves that healed her daughter but the action of *matábúla*. The explicit invocation made by her aunt to the ancestors to release the little girl withdrew her from death.

It is important to note that the aunt (father's sister) and her niece do not belong to the same clan. From this point of view, they do not have the same ancestors. That is the reason why the aunt addressed her own ancestors saying: "*Ba bavwídi mwaan'áwu ka bazoléle ko*" (those who possess the child refuse [to let her to die]).

All of these examples show how much the *Mpangu* rely on their ancestors in many problems of life.

The concern of belonging to the same clan is expressed at this stage of *Kizíku* since the participants are led to bind themselves by a covenant with the ancestors. The following section will focus on this point in order to examine the concepts of *kaangu* (the covenant) and *kubúka* (healing action) in the context of the living experience of the healing ritual.

2.3.3. *Kaangu ye kúbuka* (Covenant and Healing Process)²³

It is important to reflect first on the meaning of the *kikóongo* term of *kubééla* (being sick) in the *Mpangu* society. For, as claimed by Fink (1989):

"Every society develops techniques for dealing with misfortune and distress, and thus disease, as well as ideas on the emergence and origin of disease and misfortune".

Kimbééfo (plural: *bimbééfo*) is the general term used to indicate illness, sickness and, exceptionally, disease. The latter is often called by a specific term *n'soongo* which is a contagious disease spread among the members of a given community. The term *mbeefo* (plural: *bambééfo*) indicates a person who is ill.

Very often *Mpangu* people put *bimbééfo* into two main categories. On one hand, there are patients suffering from pains which can be easily explained, such as headaches or flu, and which may last for only a short time. This category of illness is not feared a lot. On the other hand, there exist ailments which cannot be easily explained either by the patient himself/herself or by the relatives. These are regarded as mysterious illnesses; they are a matter of great anxiety in the community. In this category are illnesses and misfortunes where the victim is affected not only in his/her body, but also in his/her mind and in relationships with the members in the community. It follows that the individual illness is regarded as a sign of the diminution of strength in the entire community. It could be said actually that ideas of illness are very much a function of the social condition of the people, their values, philosophy, attitudes and the conviction that such diseases can or cannot be treated (Singer, 1977).

As well as diseases which cause weakness of the communal strength in the community, all kinds of misfortunes are interpreted in this way. They disrupt the harmonious life of the clan.

As we have seen earlier, the woman from the village of *Makáanga*, who had an incurable and awful ^{sore} wound in her neck, acknowledged that the way to heal her affliction was to deal with the ancestors. Not all the "sick" persons healed by *Táá Mfúmu* and *Táá Ngáanga* during the healing ritual of *kiziku* were physically ill. They were victims of a variety of misfortunes. In other words, being ill in this context can be interpreted as the lack of blessing and prosperity in the clan. Therefore, all the members of the given *kaanda* (clan) consider themselves as being in an unhealthy state.

Antoine referred to this condition saying: "*Beno bayáaya, kimpasi-mpasi kíngi. Tuzolelá beenó lutomá, beetó mpi tutomá*" (Your group, *bayáaya* [relatives], has a hard time, you are suffering a great deal. Our wish is that you may get better, and us also). Therefore, being healed must be understood in terms of liberation from all kinds of afflictions, rather than recovering from simply physical pains. To heal is to re-establish a balanced life which enables a person to reconcile with all his/her living

forces. *Kubeeluka* (state of being healed) is finally the condition in which the clan can enjoy *ngwílsání* (harmony).

In order to reach this goal, the participants in the healing ritual of *Kizíku* have been asked to commit themselves to improving their fidelity to *bakúlu* (ancestors). By singing the song II,12: *Ntaangu maambu yifwééni* (it is time for acting), Antoine invited everyone to take seriously the covenant. The reason why this song is sung at this stage of the ritual is to instruct the participants so that they have an exact idea of their commitment. Then, *kusíba* (to pronounce warnings and sanctions in the event of transgression) expresses the content of prohibitions and discipline to be imposed on the members of the clan.

The two main roles played by the covenant are: to restate membership in the same clan and to bind the members, the visible and the invisible, all together. To achieve these goals, *Táá Mfúmu* (sacred chief endowed with the ancestors' power) mixes *n'luunga mí ngudi záátátu* (the bracelets of the three lineages), and shakes them while each lineage invokes its ancestors. The bracelets are shaken and those which hold together show that all belong to the same clan.

In his description of the clan of *Ntúúmba* (figure 2), the informant who is himself a member of the same clan, distinguishes *Ngúdí zí Ntúúká Koongo* (the lineages from *Kóongo* [San Salvador] in Angola) from those of the present day. According to the traditions, *Ntúúká Koongo* refers to the origin of the people *Kóongo-Mpangu* before they settled on the lands they inhabit today.

The lineages are represented by the names of three women: *Máá Nsúsa* (I), *Máá Ntúúmba* (II), *Máá Nsási* (III). A male descendant represents the head of the lineage: *Kyóóni* (I.1) for the first lineage, *Nkongá* (II.1) for the second lineage, and *Luwááwu* (III.1) for the third lineage.

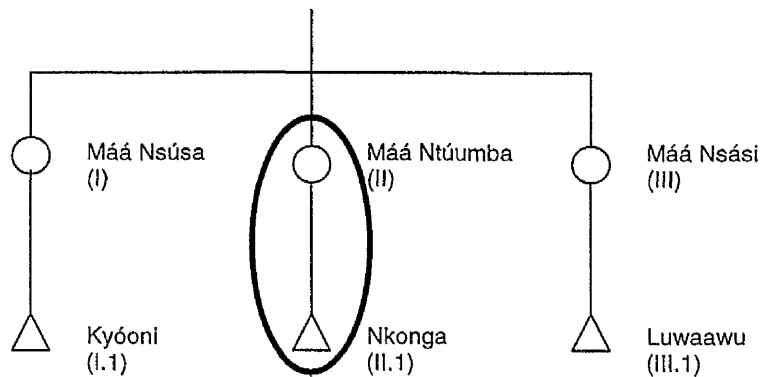
Nowadays, we deal only with one section, that is, the lineage of *Ntúúmba*. It has been divided into three *ngúdi* (lineages) which constitute the present *kaanda dí Ntuumba* (the

Figure 2:

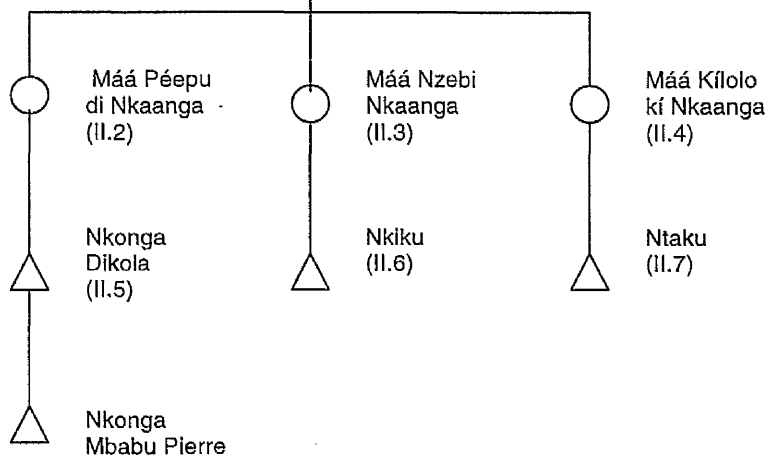
KÁÁNDA DI KINTUUMBA

(The clan of Ntuumba)*

A) Ngudi zi
Ntuuka Koongo
(Lineages from
the origin)



B) Nowadays



○ :Female

△ :Male

· | :Descendant by filiation

I, II, III : Number of lineage

* : According to the description made by N'kóko G.

clan *Ntúúmba*) in the village of *Makáánga*. Nevertheless relationships with the first lineages are not broken, since all the derivative clans develop under the same *Luvila* which is the name of the first common ancestor: *Vítí Ními Naa Mpangu zí Koongo*. The present *ngúdi* (lineages) are:

Máá Péépú dí Nkaanga (II.2)

Máá Nzébi Nkaanga (II.3)

Máá Kílóló kí Nkaanga (II.4)

Each *ngúdi* (lineage) has a male descendant as the head (II.5), (II.6), (II.7). The women are regarded as *síná dí káánda* (the foundress of the clan) while the men play the role of *mfúmú káánda* (the head of the clan), the rulers. Figure 2 shows the relationship of each member which determines his/her position in the clan.

Mkonga Mbábu does not belong to the clan *Ntúúmba* as a member. He relates to it as *mwááná-níma* (lit: son of the back) or the son of a male member of the clan), which is the position allowed by the customs in the *Mpangu* society, for the service of *lukóbi lí bákulu* (the basket of the ancestors). *Nkonga Mbábu* is the one who kept *lukóbi* at the time of the ritual of *Kizíku*, in 1973.²⁴

The specific aim of the covenant here is to renew the relationships with the ancestors of *ngúdi tátu* (three lineages) in order to rebuild *kaanda* (clan) after years of divisions and hate. These ancestors are still elders in the lineage. That is the reason why the bracelets which represent the three lineages are mixed in *lukóbi*. The fact that they hold together is interpreted as an answer from *bakúlu* (ancestors) that they approve the unity of the clan. This sign is taken seriously by the participants as expression of the ancestors' will.

As a result of a common acceptance of the ancestors' will, the participants are united as the members of the same clan. They are ready then to receive *kutóma* (well being and welfare) from the same *bakúlu* (the ancestors).

Singer's (1977) statement quoted above could be helpful here in understanding the attitude of the participants in the ritual of *Kiziku* at this stage. For instance the way prohibitions and punishments are expressed is part of the customs of the *Mpangu* society: the spokesman sings and dances first, to attract the attention of the participants in order to instruct them about contingent effects of their undertaking. Then the participants are asked to explain their complaints and express their wish to be healed. This is not only to inform *Táá Mfúmu* (the sacred chief) and *Táá Ngáanga* (the healer), but also the whole assembly. It is a kind of a "public confession" since all details related to the complaints must also be described. In this way the patient opens himself/herself to the healing action in order to be relieved from all misfortunes. This expectation contributes to the healing process.

A feeling of guilt characterises the "confession" made by the woman who had an awful wound in the neck at the village of *Makáanga*. She said that after she spent money and time trying to get cured, she also prayed to the ancestors to forgive her if she had offended them. It seems that she attributes her afflictions to the ancestors. She does not mean to accuse her ancestors of witchcraft. On the contrary, she puts herself under the protection of their power. She acknowledges them as elders who have the right of rewarding or punishing their offspring.

The healing expected by this woman goes beyond a simple improvement of her sore. Her concern is to re-establish good relationships with her ancestors. She seems not to be very sure about her own behaviour. She says: "*Sáámbá ísáámbáanga bakulu bandólúla, gó n'sikú myááwú ikúlula*" (I pray to the ancestors to forgive me if I have broken their laws). However, she is sure that, as soon as the good relationships with the ancestors are re-established, the sore would disappear in due course, since this sore has been interpreted as a visible manifestation of *bakulu*'s anger. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, this example illustrates some aspects of healing which cannot be achieved in the hospital. The *Mpangu* are certain that by means of the healing rituals they can obtain different kinds of healing.

By the appropriate song of *Léembí-leembi* (II,13) sung while the healing action takes place, the participants summarise their concept of healing. They express great concerns as well as the goal they seek to be accomplished. The first four verses of the song deal with this. These four calls refer to important areas whose healing is needed in order to enable the members to enjoy a full life which is *kutóma kú lúzíngu* (well being, welfare, and all kinds of blessings).

The chief areas are: *makaanda* (the clans) (v.1,2)

baantu (human beings) (v.3)

bandwéeio (the little ones) (v.4).

1. *E léembí-leembi e, makaanda tukwéeleembi e*
2. *Makaanda tukwéeboondi e*
3. *Ngwa baantú tükwéeétómisa e*
4. *Bandwéeéló tükwéeéyídika e*

1. Oh, *leembi-leembi*, we [try to] appease the clans
2. We [try to] heal our clans
3. We [try to] improve human life
4. We [try to] prepare the future for the little ones

Makaanda (clans): We already know that this is the point of departure of all socio-political organisations in the *Mpangu* society. According to the relation with it, a member is honoured with "*mpáti ye ngaanga*" (dignity and honourability). For Van Wing (1959) to be *mwísi káánda* (a member of the clan) is equal to being *mfúmu* (chief) or *ndóóna* (lady) in the sense of free man or free woman. His interpretation coincides with the reality as it is lived by the *Mpangu* themselves, especially in the context of *kinzoonzi*.

The formal self introduction for a spokesman or spokeswoman before taking his/her turn is to offer first a *kúfi* (formal greeting between notables) to his/her colleague, then to cite his/her identity as a member of a given clan (see the first night of *Kizíku*).

This was the way the woman introduced herself when she went by the graveyards of her ancestors, as shown in the previous example of the ritual *matábúla* (release). The citation itself aims at opposing *n'wááyí* (slave) or *muuntu nziimbu* (sold and bought person) to the *mfúmu ye ndóóna* (chief and lady) within the clan.

It is only within the clan that duties and rights can be claimed. *Makaanda* must be in good health, so that the entire society can feel strong and prosperous. This is the goal aimed at by the participants in the healing ritual of *Kiziku* through this song.

Baantu (human beings, progeniture).

The specific meaning of the term *baantu* in this context is that of the idiom *mboongo baantu* (singular: *mboongo muuntu*). It refers to offspring. The term “*mbongo*” as used and interpreted by MacGaffey (1986) puts in the same category offspring, crops, and currency. Here is an area in which the correct use of the language is helpful in giving precise meaning.

According to the semantic opposition between long and short vowels as well as between high and low tones in the *Kikóóngo* language, the term “*mbongo*” as it stands is meaningless. The correct forms are:

mbóóngo: currency

mboǒngo: crops

mboongo-muuntu (plural: *mboongo baantu*): offspring.

This distinction is based only on the pronunciation by the natives, since the use of tones and length of vowel in the written *Kikóóngo* is not formally introduced yet.

“*Baantú túkwéétómisa*” (we [try to] improve human life) can be understood as the way of strengthening the members of the clan, so that they are enabled to play their own role which is to ensure the continuity of the clan. A clan whose members – adults or children – are ill, does not have any happy future. All must be taken into account in the healing action.

Bandwéélo (the little ones)

The fourth verse *bandwéélo túkwééyídika* (we[try to] prepare the little ones) makes explicit this concern for the long life of the clan. *Bandwéélo* (the little ones) must be reared according to the customs and traditions. In so doing, the adults prepare them for their future role in the clan. For *kaanda* (clan) is immortal, say the *Mpangu* in the rural context:

Gata dilendi bulumuka (a village can be destroyed);
Kaansi kaanda ka dilendi fwa ko (but a clan cannot die)
(Van Wing, 1959:85).

The reason for this statement is “since there is always presence of *bakúlu* (the ancestors) beyond the earth, in the realm of the dead, and there are always mothers in the clan. They will provide it with *mboongo muuntu* (offspring).

The rest of the verses (5,6,7) in the song are variant forms of the same expression of concern. That is *kubeeluka* (to be healed) in order to enjoy the fulness of life. In other words, to be granted well being, welfare and all kinds of blessings from the ancestors.

The concept of being healed is connected with that of being ^{ill}. The following song: “*Máá N’tóómbó toombuká*” [II,14] (Mother *N’tóómbó* come out) performed after the healing action and blessing in the ritual of *Kizíku*, describes various aspects of affliction. The song is composed of various calls addressed to the ancestors, the female ancestors especially. Here, they are represented by a symbolic figure *Máá N’tóómbó*. The calls describe how the members of the clan are afflicted. Therefore, the life of the entire community has been hampered.

The song-text offers an opportunity for invocations and accusations at the same time. The ensemble presents a negative picture of relationships among the members in the clan. Terms and idiomatic expressions used in the song speak volumes:

- *manzála ga laká* (we are strangled), is an expression repeated throughout the song to emphasise the state of bad treatment with which the members of the clan are afflicted.

- *bikulu bi... kaanda, manzála ga laká* (the elders of the clan strangle us). The term *bikúlu* is a pejorative form to refer to the elders of the clan, instead of *mbuta zi kaanda* (elders of the clan) or *mfumu zi kaanda* (head of the clan).

- *ga kifulu ki loongo, manzála ga laká* (instead of [good relationship of] marriage, we are strangled). Not only the members of the clan are complaining about unrestful life in the community, but so are those related by affinity. It is helpful to remember that the latter are among the participants in the ritual of *Kizíku* we are analysing here.

These examples give an idea of the concept of being “ill” among the *Mpangu*. It is an ensemble of afflictions, which may be they physical, mental, or social. The following call: *Máá N'tóómbó toombuká wisi kumbuka*” (Mother *N'tóómbó*, come out to apply medicines to me) shows once again how much the participants seek being healed by their ancestors. The content of this song is connected with the section of *Mbóóka* (invocations) previously analysed. It is a cry of affliction, and therefore, an answer from the ancestors is requested.

In the context of *Kizíku*, the fact that a woman enters into a trance and is identified with an ancestor is the answer expected. The joyful message she announces is the proof of the success of the ritual. This is the reason why the participants express great thanksgiving to the ancestors as will be demonstrated in the next section.

2.3.4. *Matóóndo* (Thanksgiving)

Matóóndo is the concluding stage of the ritual of *Kizíku*. It is a special moment to honour and thank *bakúlu* (the ancestors) for the important role they played during the ritual. We have seen that at the end of the second night of the celebration of this healing ritual at the village *Makáánga*, the woman in a trance was asked questions by the

assembly, regarding her identity and the message she could bring to the clan. She introduced herself, saying: “I am So and So. *Ku masá mu kyéésí kwétó túna* (In the water, we are very glad). By this message, the participants were convinced of the success of the ritual. This was a matter of gladness among the members of the clan, because they recovered harmony with their ancestors.

Thanksgiving was sealed by a symbolic sharing of food. A chicken was thrown into the fire to be roasted and shared among all the participants. A kola nut, cut in small pieces, was distributed to everyone. Some pieces were thrown in the four directions of the village, as an offering to the ancestors. All of this was accompanied by joyful songs and dance.

The meaning of sharing during this ritual was to foster links among all the members of the clan, in order to form one body. That is the reason why – as described previously – before the healing action took place, the blood of a male goat was sprinkled on the participants, the meat was eaten by everyone. At the end, the various expressions used throughout the ritual were sealed by the same symbolism of sharing.

The way *matóóndo* is performed in the context of the healing ritual of *Kiziku* relates to the ancient celebrations described by Van Wing, (1959:333-344) under the title “La fête des morts” (celebration for the dead). Nowadays, the *Mpangu* speak of “*n’kíínsí mí ntóni*” or “*n’kíínsí mí mácímétlèrès*” (celebrations for the cemeteries), which consist in the construction of beautiful tombs for the dead of the clan. Prayers, invocations, songs, dances, and sharing meals are the main activities during the celebration. This is an opportunity for the members of the clan to thank their departed elders for all kinds of gifts and assistance received with their intervention. The food for the sharing meal is cooked on the spot, early in the morning, the day of celebration. The meal itself is taken at the cemetery, shared with the dead in the same way as explained in *Kiziku*.

The atmosphere of this celebration is similar to that referred to by Malidoma P. Somé (1994:51-52) describing his grandfather’s farewell. It is, at the same time an expression

of joy, reverence, sacredness, and thanksgiving, which makes easier the communion with all the members of the clan, the visible and the invisible.

In both celebrations: "Fête des morts" (celebration for the dead) and *Matóondo* (thanksgiving), a sharing meal with the ancestors can be considered as a symbolic way of sealing unity and communion with not only the members of the two worlds, but also among the members of each world.

The concept of *matóondo* is differently expressed by Christians of the Independent Churches. The meaning is the same: to thank God for all blessings received. The celebrations occur periodically during the year. They consist mainly in thanksgiving songs, prayers, speeches, sharing a meal, and offering gifts to the Church. The members of the Church and friends participate. There is nothing similar in the Catholic Church.

NOTES

Chapter 2 : Description of a Healing Ritual *Kiziku*

¹ *Lukóbi lú bákulu*: (the ancestors' basket). This is a covered basket made of the lamellae of the palm tree. Its contents consist primarily of several sizes of bracelets. These represent *ngúdí tátú zí káánda* (the three lineages of the clan), and ensure the link with the ancestral founders of the former *Kóóngó dí Ntóótíla* (the King's Koongo) now *Mbáánzá Congo*, in Angola. *Lukóbi* is regarded as the symbol of unity and source of government in the clan. That is why the *Mpangu* speak of it as *Luyádlú lú Ntúúká Koongo* (the government according to the customs in *Mbáánzá Koongo*, before the migrations of *Bakóongo*). The bracelets of the deceased, *Táá Mfúmu* (sacred chief for *bakúlu*'s service) and *Máá Ndóóná* (sacred lady) are among those kept in *lukóbi*.

² *Bayááya*: Plural form of the noun *yááya*; the meaning varies according to the context in which it is employed. Here it covers several kinds of relationships represented by the participants at the meeting. Everyone should be greeted with the term related to his/her kinship such as: *bampáangi* (brothers and sisters); *batááta* (fathers); *bamáama* (mothers); *bankwéési/banzádi* (brothers and sisters-in-law); *bazítu* (fathers and mothers-in-law); *bakúúndi* (friends). In other circumstances, the term *bayááya* is synonymous with *bambúta* (elders); *bankááka* (grandparents); *bakúlu* (the ancestors). In singular form: *yaaya* can refer to an elder, a grandparent, and as an exclamation generally employed in the songs.

³ *Kiimpi*: (madness). The interpretation of *Kiimpi* by the *Mpangu* is complex. It is at the same time:
- *n'kisi* or *mpoongo* (sacred means for healing) which indicates the objects and the knowledge used in healing action.

- *kimbééfo* (an illness) which bears the same name as *n'kisi*. The spokesman referred to these two aspects when he warned the members of the clan to be wise. Otherwise, instead of being cured by *kiimpi* they could become mad themselves.

⁴ *Kidiimbu*: (symbol, sign) refers to *lukóbi* (the ancestors' basket) which is the symbol of unity among the members in the clan.

⁵ *N'fúki* (a wild animal). Its skin is usually used as symbolic object worn by *ngaanga*, the healer, when he performs the healing ritual.

⁶ *Nkáka*: (pangolin); also referred to as *mbísi kinfumu* (animal related to the position of chieftain). It constitutes a preferential meal for the chief. In the past, only the chief was allowed to eat it. These two animals are rare in the region of the *Mpangu*; catching them is considered as a special blessing from the ancestors.

⁷ *Yáávoní*: This refers to Father Ivo Struyf, a Jesuit missionary in Belgian Congo. He arrived at the mission of *Kisaantu* on 28th July 1903. He devoted himself, especially, to the formation of young catechists. He died on 3rd March 1950 in Leverville (now *Lusaanga*) in Zaïre (F. Cooreman, Jesuit missionary). The fact that his name figures in this song is significant. It determines the period, that is to say: it goes back a long time. That shows the persistence of customs, so to speak; even missionaries could not change them.

⁸ An internal dispute among the leaders of the lineages divided the clan. In this case, no one within the clan had the credibility to lead the process of reconciliation; and external intervention was needed. The leaders of the lineages agreed to ask experts from another clan to lead the ritual. This explains the presence of *Táá Mfúmu* and his assistant.

⁹ The question: *Keti tóló lúléédi?* (Are you sleeping?) and the statement: *Monó kiléédi ko* (I, I do not sleep) mean that the participants of *kiziku* were concerned about the ritual to be performed. They urged *bakúlu* to take it into account and come to help them.

¹⁰ *Ngúmbi Mákáánda, Kyáándú kí Mátátámá dí Nzéénzé Báántu, Matá má Koongo*: Are the names of the ancestors in whose name *Táá Ngáánga* spoke.

¹¹ *Mpoongo*: Can be understood here as the "sacred means" for healing, that is, objects and knowledge. This term can be used as synonymous with "*n'kisi*" when referring to its aspect as an instrument or as a technique for healing. Given the ambiguity of the concept of the term "*n'kisi*" (which indicates only evil aspects, nowadays), my informants suggested the use of "*mpoongo*" or "*n'kita*" to refer to the "means" for healing.

¹² *Ndúúndu*: A religious figure mentioned in the ritual of *Kimpási* which is, according to Van Wing, an institution regarded as a remedy for the misfortunes which befall society (1959:429). *Kimpási* is a rite of initiation of the young among the *Mpangu*. It was performed for the purpose of fostering the prosperity of the clan. *Mother Ndúúndu*, as she was called, played the main role. She is a hideous woman who was rendered sterile by the *Nkita* (spirits of a category of the dead).

¹³ *Mbaka*: Dwarfs. They played the role of severe guardians for the candidates at the ritual of *Kimpási*. The association of these two beings in the rite of *Kimpási* rendered the rite a fearful experience, e.g. transgression of the *Kimpási* rules could put the subject under the control of *Ndúúndu* and *Mbaka*. Although *Kimpási* does not exist any longer, the idiom "*Ndúúndu ye Mbaka*" is still employed in the wording of the ritual as an esoteric language.

¹⁴ *Zábálá-zabala*: Onomatopoeic word which describes the very swift way in which the spirits of the ancestors move; they are weightless.

¹⁵ *Nkúka*: Name of a bird with beautiful feathers. Here, the meaning is not clear. Apparently there is a play of words in: *n'káándá mfuka* (v.3); *n'káándá nkuka* (v.4); *ntáándú nkuka* (v.10).

¹⁶ *Kusíba*: The act of pronouncing warnings accompanied by sanctions in the event of transgressions. It is also a way of reinforcing the weight of the words and formulae employed by the healer. In the context of the symbolic objects which serve *n'kisi* and *nkita*, this ceremony is called *kukóma siki* (empowering).

¹⁷ *Léémbi-leembi*: is the name of one *mpoongo* (the sacred means of healing). It has the effect of calming, soothing, as is indicated by the radical verbal [-leemb-] whose infinitive is /kulée+mba/ or /kuleembika/ (to impart peace, to calm). Here, it is invoked for the cause of sufferings.

¹⁸ *Máá N'tóómbó*: A religious figure who represents any female ancestor. In this context she is asked to come forth and help people who are suffering. This name is borne nowadays by women who have picked *nkita* (sacred means for healing) from the river during the ritual of the same name: *kutoombula nkitá* (to pick the sacred means for healing from the bed of the river).

¹⁹ Interview with J. Málaka on 23 July 1995 at *Mbaánzá Ngúúngu*. Born on 22.11.1937 at *Mbaánzá Ngúúngu*. He is an Agronomist by education, and former Agent of Administration in Zaïrean State. Nowadays he is a peasant and an influential member in his Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart, served by Redemptorists. Parish leader for "Scouting", one of the Catholic Organisations for youth.

²⁰ This is a form for cursing: Firstly, the speaker describes the situation as it should be: "We have inherited the forest from you. It belongs to all of us." He/she means that, therefore, the product of the forest should be shared by all the members of the clan. Secondly, he/she claims his/her rights ignored by his/her relatives; the claim is accompanied by a statement of punishment invoked on behalf of the guilty person.

²¹ *Matábúla*: An illustration reported by Van Wing (1959:237), shows that not only the sick person is concerned about *matábúla* (release) but also the relatives, since they are suspected of *kindoki* (occult power) by which they may be thought to be the cause of illness of their sick relative. When important members of the clan are gathered around the sick person, the leader informs them of the reason why they

are convoked. Briefly, he/she explains the health condition of the sick person. The following ritual takes place to convince everyone that the leader himself /herself is not *ndoki* (sorcerer):

He/she spits on his/her own legs and arms, saying:
I spit on my legs and arms,
So that our relative will recover strength and force,
May he/she sleep soundly.
If I am the one who has bewitched him/her,
May I eat rather my leg and my arm.

Each relative in turn is invited to kneel before the sick person, and to make proof of his/her innocence. The ritual releases him/her from the bondage of suspicion.

²² Interview with Kiata-Boonga, A.: September 1973 at *Ngééba*.

²³ *Kubúka*: (healing action). The *Mpangu* make a distinction between the two verbs: *kubúka* (to apply the medicine substances with a view to obtain the healing) and *kubeelula* (to take away a sickness). The first refers to the means used to recover a healthy state while the second indicates the result. The linguistic distinction occurs because the results of the actions are different. One applies physically to the body (*kubúka*), and the other is a more spiritual idea (*kubeelula*) meaning to heal the person. In the context of healing rituals, *kubúka* can be understood as the manner in which the objective – healing – can be achieved.

²⁴ *Nkonga Mbábu*: or Pierre Mbábu represented his father's side. During *kinzoonzi*, at the beginning of the ritual, he played the role of spokesman, opposed to Antoine and his people. In so doing, he acted as the chief of lineage. The songs II,7 and II,8 were addressed to him by Antoine who disapproved of Pierre's speech.

CHAPTER 3

N'KIKU MI BANKITA

(The Bankita Rituals)

Edith Turner's (1992:3) remark, regarding an interpretation of fieldwork material, shows how an attitude can change according to the way anthropologists deal with the people they are studying. In the past, she commented, the functionalism developed by Malinowski, for example, held that the survival, that is, practical life and its needs, was primary, and religion served that end.

"Now", she states, "modern anthropologists have learnt to regard the tales told by the fieldwork subjects about spirits and powers as greatly significant. Investigators study the cultural forms surrounding such magical events —that is, symbols – and trace their hermeneutic paths, how each symbol expresses various social or mental structures and relates to certain social or psychological characteristics" (1992:3).

The meaning of the healing rituals, as an expression of religious thought, is the theme of this thesis. The following accounts reported by persons involved in the rituals of *Bankita* help in the understanding of this phenomenon among the *Mpangu*. The stories relate to how *Bankita* are brought from the water by a chosen person. In the first story, a woman, *Basáwula*,¹ reports how her relatives had this experience of *Bankita*. *Bankita* or *Nkita* indicate spirits of a particular category of the dead. They are represented by a series of objects called "*mpoongo*" within which these spirits dwell.

3.1. *Kutoombula Bankitá* (to bring *Bankita* from the water)

This episode happened in the fifties, observed *Basáwula*, who had played a significant role in the ritual. After a long period of suffering and many internal difficulties, her family had the privilege of welcoming *Nkita* as a gift from the ancestors, so that the ill members of the family could be healed and then themselves become healers.

“Before that time”, she said, “our family knew nothing about *Bankita*. It happened that my sister *Makáya* became seriously ill and she remained so several years. Sometimes she seemed to be ‘dead’ for three or four days. Our efforts to improve her health failed. We brought her to the hospital at *Kisaantu* but in vain. She was even unable to breast-feed her child. Afterwards we observed that some of our belongings in the house disappeared: money, clothes, utensils. We could not understand anything about this situation.

My brother who lived at *Kinshasa* at that time, took *Makáya* with him. He brought her to several hospitals, but in vain. His friends suggested he should try the traditional ways of healing. He was told to contact a woman called *Ida Nkeengi*. He went and introduced his sick sister”:

-‘I come here with my sister, she has been ill for years. I have been to the hospitals but she has not improved. Finally, I come to you, hoping you can help her.’
-‘Your sick sister will herself show what is wrong, not me’,
answered the woman [*Nkeengi*].

“Then she attached manioc leaves around my brother’s and my sick sister’s wrists. She sang an appropriate song. Suddenly, my sick sister jumped up and started *kutuuntuka* (trance). This was the very first time a member of our family ever had a trance. We had not had this experience before. She became possessed by a spirit. She ran into the healer’s room. When she came out, she brought a basket which contained stones. She placed it in the middle of the sitting room where we were. She said:

‘Eh! Now I understand the meaning of my illness. It is not caused by *bandoki* (sorcerers). It is because our own father [dead in 1948] is trying to buy a gift for us because we are going through hard times. This is the way he wants to help us so that we may enjoy well-being and welfare. When you examine the

way I get ill, you realise that some days I seem like a 'dead' person. This is called *ngúmbi*. I will be given a *mpoongo ngúmbi* (means and techniques to heal patients suffering from the illness of the same name: *ngúmbi*). After the family becomes the owner of this gift I will be able to heal patients.² You know I feel pain under my feet, there are small sores there. These were caused by an evil person. Do not worry about it. I will be healed'.

"She went on, naming all the *mpoongo* provided for our family (section of the clan): *Mbúdi, Manzanza, Léémbi, Wumba*.³ She was expected to have an experience of suffering first from each type of these *mpoongo*, then be healed by the same means. She said again":

'You are wondering why, at home, your money disappears, why the clothes you dry outside disappear too. Do not claim them any more. It is I, your father, who take them. I need them to buy the gift I am giving to you [*nkita/mpoongo*], We must return to *Kináánga*, our village in order to take possession of our *mpoongo*, not here at *Kinshasa*'.

Then the healer *Nkeengi* gave her a solution of *lémbá-lémba* leaves to drink. She became quiet and calm. She went back home (she lived in *Kinshasa*, at *Yólo* quartier). She felt better. We, her relatives, did nothing to look for this *mpoongo*.

One night she dreamt that she was offered by the ancestors a basket containing beautiful stones and *masúúnga* (plaits). She kept the dream to herself. During the day she went to wash up dishes in the *Yólo* stream. When she was washing she felt her feet sinking into the water. For the second time she saw the basket which she had dreamt of during the previous night. She moved from that place to protect her little boy who was playing near the stream. As she moved, the water disappeared, the place where she was

working dried up. The same vision of the basket and the experience of the water under her feet were repeated twice. She finished her washing up and went back home.

The following night she dreamt that she was told: 'Have you seen the "things" we showed you last night? They are the same which you saw at the stream. As you have seen them, this is the way you will receive them. If your child had not been with you at the stream, you would be missing for eight days, we would have taken you with us; on the 9th day you would go back home with all of these "things".'

When she told us [her relatives] this news, she said: 'We must return now to our village in order to take possession of these "things" since they are near, it is time to get them. The ritual will take place at that part of the village where we lived before our father died. It is there where my sister's son, who bore our father's name, was buried. This is the site where *Kiziku* will be performed'. We asked:

'How can we deal with these rituals since we have no experience about this area?' 'I know how we will proceed', she answered.
'My ancestors are very close to me. They will direct everything.'

Then we prepared ourselves to return to our village.

Back in the village, *Makáya* fixed the date: we were asked to provide nine faggots of firewood of specific trees, only *kiseka* and *minsánga* (two kinds of trees) were allowed. In addition she asked us for at least two demijohns of *nsáámbe* (palm wine), *makáásu* (kola nuts), *ntúúmbu* (a needle). We also had to clear the site of our former village.

When the day came, she went herself during the day to arrange the firewood for *Kiziku* which would take place during the following night. She prepared everything according to the instructions received from the ancestors. We did all we were asked to do. When we were back home she told us to organise the evening as usual, that is, to cook our meal, to eat, and

to go to bed. She promised to wake us up in time during the night, for the ritual. We did as she asked us. She did not sleep herself. At about 11 p.m. she called us. I noticed that she was changed, she looked strange. She was already inhabited by her *bakúlu*".

'Let us go', she said. 'Wherever we go do not be afraid when you feel a strong wind. This is the way my ancestors, whom I have convoked, will join us. Follow me.'

"She led us to the chosen site. When we arrived we sat down on the ^{ground} ~~rice~~ while she was singing. To us, the songs seemed new, but she sang in such a way as if she had known them for years. We sang after her for a period of time. Suddenly, a strong wind blew bringing a very bad smell, everyone noticed it. *Makáya* reminded us:

"Do not be afraid! Do not avoid the bad smell! Do not be surprised! We are no longer alone here. The yard is full with our ancestors from our father's side and those from our mother's".

"Then she kindled the amount of dead wood faggots she had prepared in advance, during the day. She sang and danced around the fire. After a period of singing, she ran to a well called *Bimfúsu*. She took with her some *nsáámbe* (palm wine) and *makáásu* (kola nuts). We followed her singing and playing *ngóóngi* (a twin-bell used as a musical instrument). She went into the well, dug the mud with her hands. She seemed to be looking for some objects in the mud. We stood up on the shore, we kept on singing and playing *ngóóngi*. She drank *nsáámbe*, ate *káásu*, and continued her digging into the mud of the well. She found stones which she handed over to us. We brought them home, but we did not know what to do with them.

Makáya said: 'We must fetch *Náá Kímbeembi*⁴ from his village *Nguunda*, a village in the *Bandíbu* area. *Yáání úfvétí kóma byóo biima* (he is the one who must empower these objects), then only we

will use them. Before that we must go through a ritual for initiation: *vweela*'.

"After a few days we proceeded to fetch *Náá Kímbeembi*. When he came he examined our stones. He introduced us then to *vweela*⁵ which took place at the village of *Kintúdi* during nine days. The authorities at *vweela* changed our names: *Makáya* was called from then on *Máá N'tóombo mí Mpóongo* since she was the woman who brought *mpoongo* (sacred means for healing) from the water. She was expected to know the plants which are needed for healing the patients. Her elder sister *N'káansa* became *Máá Ndóona* since she was chosen by the authorities at *vweela* to carry out the responsibility of healing patients in the future. I, myself *Basáwula* received the name of *Mbíúnda má Ngóombo* (the one who is expected to interpret events). I was also called by the name *Máá N'laambi* (the one who cooks) as I cooked the meals for the candidates; [(*kuláamba*: to cook)].

The bodies and clothes of the candidates were then painted with *nkúla* (red kaolin). Each morning they had symbols drawn on their foreheads, cheeks and arms with *mpéemba* or *lugéemba* (chalk).⁶ All the time we had to stay in the compound. We were taught songs, dances and techniques for healing.

The 9th⁷ day was a feast day for the closure of *vweela*. We provided a goat to be killed, nine demijohns of palm wine, plantains, manioc bread and chickens for the feast. On the eve, *Kizíku* was performed to ensure that the environment was ready for empowering our *mpoongo*. *Náá Kímbeembi* and his assistants led the ritual. The blood of the goat was poured out on the stones, leaves of various plants were mixed and put into a parcel. All of that was arranged in a basket which was given to *Máá N'tóombó mí Mpóongo*, saying:

*‘Ngé mósi bakulu báku bena yáku, baawú sí bákúyikáángá
mooko mu kuzaayá biimá bi ufwetí búkilá baantu, bwé úfwetí
bákilá byo’.*

(Your own ancestors will help you; they will show you what
you need for healing people, and how to get it.)

“The next morning we left the village of *Kintúdi*, we went back to *Kináánga*, our village. *Máá N’tóombo* and *Máá Ndóóna* could not go with us, because it is forbidden to travel with *mpoongo* during the day. It was very late in the night when they arrived at the village bringing it with them.

Afterwards *mpoongo* was taken to *Kinshasa*, kept by *Máá Ndóóna*. It was very effective. Many people, adults and children were cured and healed. Among her methods, *Máá Ndóóna* performed *vweela*. The songs and drums made so much noise that we were accused of disturbing our neighbours. This happened during the period of “Flemish”⁸ occupation (before the Independence of the country, in 1960). *Máá Ndóóna* lived at *Yólo, Sakánia* street, 6. The police went to her house, and asked:

P: ‘Is it true that your neighbours cannot sleep during the night
because of the noise of your drums’?

MN: ‘That is right’.

P: ‘Do you hide people inside your house’?

MN: ‘That is right. Here they are’.

P: ‘Could you take out all these stones’?

MN: ‘No, I cannot. But you may go in and take them out’.

“The police went in, stood before *YALA* (a beautiful place, all cleaned up and prepared for keeping *mpoongo*). After a short inspection of the objects and the people inside the house, the police said: ‘There is nothing bad here; all of this is good’. Then they left us”.

[At the end of her story, *Basáwula* regretted that these *mpoongo* are no longer in use by her family. Actually there were misunderstandings between *Máá Ndóóná*, and her children, and her nephews and nieces. The latter attributed to her the cause of their misfortunes because she kept *Bankíta* in her house. She was forced to give up the practice of healing. Persons who were members of a “group of prayer” were convoked. After they prayed upon *mpoongo*, they buried them.

Basáwula affirmed that the present illnesses in the family, especially the bad health of *Máá Ndóóná*, were to be attributed to the *Bankíta* which were buried. Unfortunately, it is not possible to re-install them because the rituals are very expensive. The family is poor and does not have money for that].

3.2. *Kuyáála Nkítá* (Initiation for the service of *Bankíta*)

[The second account reported by *A. Budyóóngo*⁹ describes the same ritual of *kutoombula Bankítá* (to bring *Bankíta* from the water) in the context of re-installation after interrupting the practice of it. The reason was that the elders of the clan were told by diviners to go back to the ancestral customs. “*Luvutukilá kiinkulu kíkála ye bámbútá zéno*” (go back to your ancestors’ practice) so that the clan could enjoy well being and welfare. *Budyóóngo* introduces her account in terms of *Kuyaala Nkita* (a kind of training for a specific function) in the sense of being initiated, invested with the power of *Bankíta*. She mainly focuses on the training aspect of the ritual.

Before telling the story, she introduced herself as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* (the chosen and entrusted for the service of *Bankíta*); she prepared to make contact with *Bankíta*. While she distributed *nsáámbe* (palm wine) and *makáásu* (kola nuts) she said]:

*“Matóóndo ye mbidi mátoondo ku báNsiimba ye baNzuzi ye
baN’lááandu ye baLukóombo ye baNgisila ye baKatumáákoo ye
baN’suunda ye baNduundu-Bwááka.”¹⁰*

Matóóndo ye makáásu ku báNsiimba ye baNzuzi.

Mónó Kínkóló kí Mpóóngo:

bátuumba ku nsekí, batuumba ku masá.

Nsí n'kulu, muuntu n'kulu

Tukába matóóndo ye makáásu ku Bayááyá béto báyénda ku masá.

Lutuzíbulula nzila, Bayáaya, ka lutukáángilá nzilá ko.

Kadi binzá bísiisa Bambuta zéto:

Tubutá, tulela; tusalá, tukela.

Nsí n'kulu, muuntu n'kulu,

Bikóondá n'kulu: bífwa, bíbiya"'

(Thanks, many thanks to all the *Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi* (the Twins), to *N'laandu* and *Lukoombo* (the first and second children born after the twins' birth), to *Ngisila* and *Katumááko* (the third and fourth children after the twins), to *N'suunda* and *Nduundu-Bwááka* (the child with an unusual position at birth, and the albinos).

Mushrooms of love and kola nuts to you *Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi* (the twins)

I am *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* [that is]:

The one who has been rendered sacred by [the powers of] the living and the dead.

Each country [has] an ancestor, each person [must have] an ancestor.

We distribute kola nuts to our ancestors gone to the water.

Be opened to us, do not obstruct the way

It is the tradition of our ancestors

May we have offspring and be prosperous.

Each country [has] an ancestor, each person [must have] an ancestor.

Those who do not have an ancestor are nothing, they are distorted).

[After this ritual introduction *Budyóóngo* seemed to be ready to be interviewed. She explained the way the ritual of *Kuyáála Bankítá* (to be initiated through *vweela*, for the service of *Bankíta*) was organised. She said]:

“My name is *A. Budyóóngo*. I am known as *Kinkóó kí Mpóóngo*. This is the name I received during my initiation at *vweela*. This name indicates that I am the one who was appointed by the ancestors to be invested with the power from *kú nseki* (world of the living) and *ku mása* (world of the dead).

The reason why my relatives and I were initiated for *Bankíta* was the suffering in the clan: women had many difficulties in giving birth to a child, several of them were childless; madness attacked some of our kinsmen; there were divisions and hate among the members of our clan. We have noticed several cases of death we could not explain. Therefore, some of our elders were suspected by other members of the clan to be the cause of these misfortunes. The former were accused by the latter at the Court of Justice at *Kimpéémba*. The judges examined the problem, then sent both plaintiff and defendant to consult the diviners. The latter told our elders:

‘*Luvutukilá kinkulu kíkála ye bámbútá zéno*’ (go back to your ancestral practice). Your ancestors have had several important *mpoongo*: *Kiimpi*, *Ngúmbi*, *Mvúúmbi-Mása*, *Nkítá-N^zíinga*. If you revere them you will feel better. For those among you who are suffering from madness, you must go through the healing ritual of *vweela*’.

Back at the Court of Justice, our elders reported the result of their investigations. The judges allowed them to perform *vweela* according to the request of the diviners. This happened in the seventies. Our uncle fetched *Táá Ngáángá Mátuutu* to organise *vweela* for us, for sick and healthy relatives. He provided a large compound made of palm branches. We stayed three months at *vweela* (April-June). During this period *tutoombulá Nkítá* (we brought *Nkítá* from the water), we were initiated regarding several *mpoongo* (objects and techniques for healing) such as *Kiimpi* and *Lufwá lú Mása* (death in the waters) [also called *Mvúúmbi-Mása*] (dead body in the waters).

The ritual of *Kutoombula Nkitá* was led by *Táá Ngáángá Mátuutu* and his assistants on the day of *Kóónso*.¹¹ All the participants at *vweela* were marked with kaolin on their faces, cheeks and arms. We went to a river. *Táá Ngáángá* distributed *nsáámbe* (palm wine), *káásu* (kola nut) and *tóóndo* (mushroom of love) to the ancestors, to greet them.”

[The storyteller stressed that only the persons who had had the experience of *kufwá nkitá* (to die the death of *nkita*) were capable of finding *mpoongo* in the bed of the river]. “In trance, they went into the river while an ancestor inhabited them. Guided by the spirit of their ancestors, these persons revealed secret things. When the spirit of the ancestors left them, they fell on the ground as dead bodies. This is what is called “*kufwa nkita*” (to die the death of *nkita*) which usually happens at *vweela*. These persons went into the river to look for *mpoongo* (sacred means for healing) which they would be given by the ancestors. When they came back they brought with them several balls of kaolin picked up from the bed of the river. We took them with us to our village, and dried them.

Then came the day for the ritual of *kukóma siki di kiimpi* (empowering the objects) so that they could be effective in healing *kiimpi* (madness). To achieve this goal, we went to bury an antelope’s horn at the place where a person who had been killed with a knife was buried. The horn was placed there the night before. The following day we found it there ready, that is to say, it already contained the necessary ingredients, one of which was a handful of earth taken from the tomb of this person who had been killed with a knife.

Then we gathered the *nkáwu kiimpi* (all kinds of branches and leaves) we could find in this area. When we returned to the place where *vweela* stood we dried all those leaves for the closing ceremony. Each day, while we waited for the closing day of the ritual we were instructed and initiated regarding the medicinal plants which would be used eventually for healing patients.

A vigil was organised on the night before the closing day: we remained in the open, and all the leaves and branches which had been collected were burnt. We were obliged to warm ourselves by the fire kindled with these leaves. On the following day we went to *Tádi dí mpóóngo* (the stone of *mpoongo*). This is an enormous stone placed near the graveyard of our ancestors. Each person who was responsible for *mpoongo* (the objects and techniques for healing such specific complaints) climbed on to the stone and swallowed a hen's egg.

After that there followed the ritual of *kuziika n'yalu*. This is a ceremony for burying the barks of the tree called *N'séénga* which had served as mats during the period of *vweela*. All these *n'yalu* were placed in a large white cloth called *Máá Mvúúmbi N'núúku* (mother is dead, the body smells). All was carried out near the ancestors' graveyard. *N'yalu* (barks) were buried close to *tádi mpóóngo*. *Máá Mvúúmbi N'núúku* (white large cloth) was buried at the cross roads of the paths. A *N'saanda* (ritual tree) sapling was planted on that spot. It was this way that *vweela* ended.

The following day, *ngáánga* (priest/initiator) led us across the forest to a grassy plain to show us a variety of medicinal plants. For the last time he explained to us the methods to be used and the reasons for choosing those plants. After that we went home".

3.3. The Mpangu Concept of Bankita

The two reported accounts give an idea of two kinds of experience. One was a new contact with *Bankita* in a family; the second was an opportunity to resume and reinforce relationships with *Bankita*. In the two reports, the event appears chiefly as a privilege for the clan or for a single family which needs to be helped in a special way. It is not necessarily true that each clan in the *Mpangu* society is owner of *Bankita*, but all the clans can make profit from them since these are regarded as being the means for healing patients.

Life-crisis situations are selected by the ancestors to intervene in the afflictions which befall the community. For the first account: *Makáya* became seriously ill and she

remained so for several years. The intervention of *bakúlu* came in the hope of healing the sick person and of granting to the family a special knowledge of healing. In the second story, *Budyóóngo* referred to the similar situation of crisis in her clan: all kinds of misfortunes, frequent deaths, suspicions among the members of the clan, and disunion. When the elders sought an explanation for these afflictions and misfortunes, they were informed of the judges' verdict: "*Luvutulá kinkulu ki bámbútá zéno*" (go back to your ancestors' tradition). It meant that no solution could be found outside the ancestors' intervention. The elders certainly understood that the ancestors were expecting to help the clan, to heal its sick members, and to grant them a special gift of knowledge and technique for healing.

According to the *Mpangu*, the concept of *Bankíta* must be interpreted in terms of response to a concrete case of unexplainable afflictions in the clan. The painful experience of illness and misfortune, as well as the failure in seeking a solution, disposed the people to recognise the incidence of *Bankíta* as a special intervention of the ancestors in helping their relatives.

In answer to the question: "*Bankítá banáni?*" (*Bankita* who are they?), three definitions were given by informants:

1. "*Nkitá, a ndé: n'kisi, káánsi miswááma muna nsí mátadi*". (*Nkita* are the means for healing, they are hidden within the stones).
2. "*Nkitá, mpilá mósi kwáni ye mpoongo ye n'kisi. Mu mbaandu gó gana familiya dyáku, káni ngúdi aku, gó ngé kibeeni, mu mpoongo lúbútukila, yína mpoongo yifwétí toómbúka "plus tard". N'kisi wína wúbútukila ngudi áku wufwétí toómbúka kaka gana fámídi*". (*Nkita* are identical with *mpoongo* and *n'kisi*, that is, the means for healing. For example, if your mother or yourself, anyone in your clan was born under the influence of *mpoongo*, it will happen that, later, this *mpoongo* will come [from the water] to stay in the clan).
3. "*Nkitá, n'kisi mí bákulu, mítuuka kuná Koongo. Mina boonsó bilóóngo bi túkwénwáánga ku dispensaire. Gó muuntu táábééla gana fámídi, tubookedi ngaanga*".

Bánkita, wiisidi mu kubuká n'kisi mína mí Ntúúká-Koongo. Mína mí tubookiláanga ndé: mpoongo". (*Nkíta* are *n'kisi* which came from the ancestors from *Koongo*; we can compare them with the medicine we used to take from the dispensary. When anyone in the clan is ill, we fetch *ngaanga-Bánkita*; he comes to heal us, as he uses these means originated from *Koongo*, for healing. These are what we used to call: *mpoongo*.)

In the three descriptive-definitions, the term *Bankíta* (or *Nkíta*) is used as synonymous with those of *n'kisi* (in the sense of means of healing) and *mpoongo*. They all deal with the specific knowledge and technique for healing. That is what the informants meant when they said: *Nkíta, n'kisi mí bákulu* (*Nkíta* [are] *n'kisi* of the ancestors).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the double meaning combined in the term is the salient feature of the concept of *Bankíta/Nkíta* among the *Mpangu*, for the terms refer at the same time to the specific objects as well as to the specific beings. Linguistically, the term *Bankíta* is a noun of the nominal class 2 of which the prefix [ba-] indicates the plural. Generally, the nouns contained in this class refer to human beings and humanised objects. On the contrary, the term *Nkíta* falls into class 9, prefix [n-/0] (for the singular), and class 10, prefix [zi-/0] (for the plural) as an identical form. The nouns of the classes 9 and 10 often indicate an object. The people of *Mpangu* with whom we deal are not aware of the above observations. They do not make any distinction in use.

According to MacGaffey's (1986:75) analysis, the concept of *Bankíta* is related to a series of deaths which a human being undergoes in unbroken succession before he/she becomes *nkíta nsi* (the guardian spirit of the land). Actually, as mentioned in Laman's texts, there are people who die naturally "*lufwá lú Nzámbe*" (God's death), that is, the death which comes from God. They die after a long and successful life on the earth. These people cannot die again. On the contrary, there are those who die violently (of poison, of a knife, of suicide) or those who have been known as bad persons in their life; they are subject to successive deaths. When they are killed the second time, they become *nkíta nsi* (guardian spirits of the land), (Cahier 130 cited by MacGaffey).

Following this view we see that *nkíta* and *bisímbi* (local spirits) are confusedly put in the same category since, according to some people, the latter constitute a specific group of spirits among the dead because they are human beings who have died twice, first on earth and then in the land of the dead.

Some questions may be raised to help in understanding the meaning of several deaths:

Do the “successive deaths” mean that people who had died a long time ago are gradually forgotten by their relatives, and thus relationships with them became rare, even non-existent? Are there several levels of death in the realm of the dead?

Unfortunately I have not obtained any information which enables us to answer these questions. Certainly, a distinction made by Van Wing (1959:292) differentiates *bisímbi* from *Bankíta*. The latter are said to have died by war, assassination, or suicide. However, the *Mpangu* today cannot clearly define the identity or the influence of these two groups of spirits over human beings within the clan.

Two rituals: *Kukóma siki di Kiimpi* (to empower the objects used in the process of healing madness) and *Nkawu Kiimpi* (leaves and branches collected from the site where someone had died by a knife) were mentioned by *Budyóóngo* in the second story. They are connected to both the specific category of the spirits of these people who died by violence, and to the site where they were buried. People hold the belief that the spirit of those killed inhabits the area where they were killed during the battles, and it affects each object put in contact with it. This explains why the antelope's horn was filled with a handful of soil taken from the tomb of the victims of violence. The spirit takes possession of the object, and transforms it into a vital and effective force. All kinds of leaves and branches collected from that area become important in the ritual since they were put under the power of the spirit.

The link between the ritual and its site enables participants to communicate with the invisible powers. This is the reason why *Makáya*, in the first story, insisted that the ritual of *Kutoombula Nkítá* (to bring [out of the water] sacred means for healing) which

she was expected to achieve, must take place at that part of the village where her father lived before he died and where her sister's son, who bore the father's name, was buried. It entailed the moving of *Makáya* and her relatives from *Kinshasa* to the village of *Kinánga* (about 140 kilometres distant).

Bearing in mind that the deceased father was the one who was looking forward to granting his children the special gift of *Bankíta*, we understand why his grandson's tomb became important. It was regarded as the deceased father's dwelling. *Makáya* needed this contact with the spirit of her father to learn how to welcome the special gift of *Bankíta* to the family.

The concept of *Bankíta* is analysed in the studies of scholars such as Laman (1962), Buakasa (1980 and 1988), MacGaffey (1986) following Laman. They identify *Bankíta* with the powerful spirits of a specific category of the dead. To Van Wing (1959:292), *Bankíta* are both human and incarnated spirits. They inhabit the forests and rivers and from there they join the humans' villages to look for food. Their best food is composed of fruits such as bananas, fruit of *kilólo* tree, *mafválánta* (guava) and *mbungu-mbungu*. These people are strong white beings.

Moreover, although there is the tendency to identify *Bankíta* with human beings, Van Wing stressed a link between them and *n'kisi*¹². For illustration he spoke about *tádí dí Nkita* (stone of *Nkita*) which was fetched by an expert to put with his/her *n'kisi* so that they become *n'kisi mí Nkita* (the *n'kisi* under the influence of *Bankíta* spirit).

As we have seen in the three descriptive-definitions mentioned above, the terms *Nkita/Bankíta* and *mpoongo* indicate both the spirits of a special group of the dead and the objects within^{which} they dwell. It seems that the concept combines two aspects of the reality: one is material and visible, another is spiritual and invisible. Informants claim that *Bankíta* are "*n'kisi mí bákulu*" (ancestors' means for healing) meant that both the material and spiritual aspects are *bákulu*'s property. *N'siumbu*¹³ precisely insisted that *Nkita* or *mpoongo* came from *Kóongo*¹⁴; he meant to emphasise this link between the

Mpangu people of today and their ancestors. He referred to the period of the *Mpangu* migrations before they settled in the area they inhabit today.

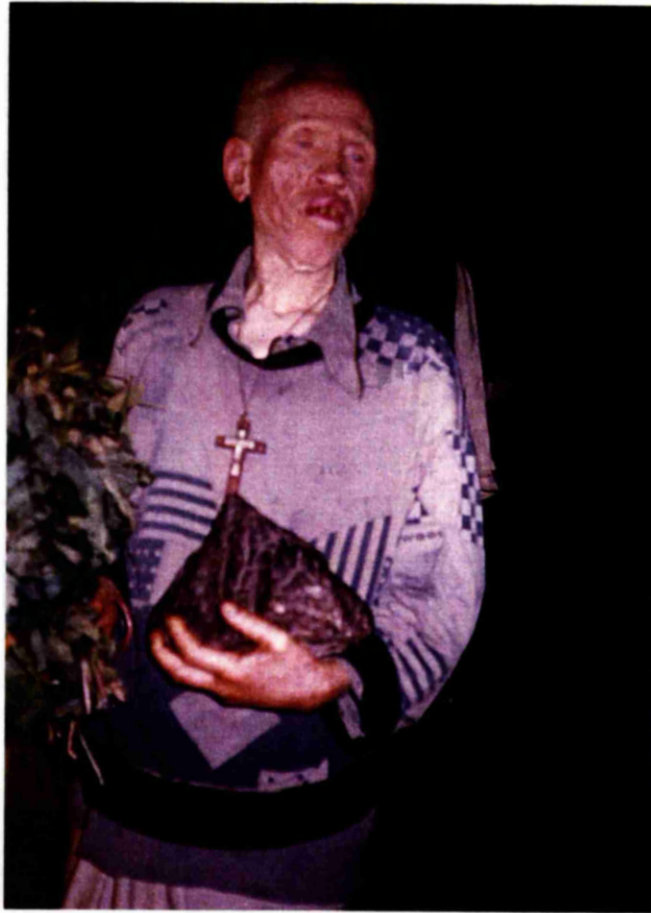
Among objects brought with them from *Kóongo*, pointed out by Van Wing, there were those related to *luyáálú lú bákulu muna kaanda* (the ancestors' government of the clan). These were such as *lukóbi lú bákulu* (the ancestors' basket), *n'luúnga* (bracelets, leg-rings), *mvwaala* (chief's stick) [...]. Curiously, except *lukóbi*, these were the objects I saw, besides stones and kaolin, in the houses I was privileged to visit during my fieldwork research.

The same objects are nowadays employed by *ngaanga-Bánkita* (the specialist, priest of *Bankíta*, or healer whose healing power operates in connection with *Bankíta's* intervention) when he/she deals with patients to be healed. The concept of *Bankíta* goes beyond the visible aspect of the ritual. For example, before accepting a patient for a healing session, *ngaanga-Bankíta* invoked his/her ancestors in front of these objects. Through them he could communicate with the invisible world.

It can be said of *Bankíta* what Laman's informant stated about *n'kísi*: "If they had not life, how could they heal and help people?" But this life is different from ordinary human life (MacGaffey, 1991:35). *Bankíta* are endowed with life that comes from the spirits of the dead by whom they are empowered. Nowadays, the concept of *Bankíta* is not interpreted in the same way by the members of *Mpangu* society. To some people, *Bankíta* and *n'kísi* fall into the same category. Actually, in some cases, similarities can be noted between these two entities. For example, following MacGaffey's (1991:4-5) description of *n'kísi*, some common features can be observed:

Visible and Invisible Nature

Nkíta and *n'kísi* have a body that can be seen and touched. A bag, a bark-box, a calabash, a pot, a snail shell, are common objects which contain *n'kísi*. Generally, the representative objects of *Nkíta* are: some stones (*matádi*), a kaolin ball (*lugéémbe*), a walking stick (*n'kawu*), an animal's horn (*mbaambi*), a couple of bracelets (*n'luúnga*).



Nsyoona Mangituka, P. "le Blanc"

A *Táá Mfúmu Bánkita*, holding one of the stones which represent *Bankita*, called "*Nkááká Nkyeesa*".



Lugeemba, L.

Holding a special walking stick as symbol of his function as "*Saangila Mpoongo*" (the initiated man entrusted with entertaining *mpoongo*, the sacred medicines).

At the same time, the invisible aspect is represented through metaphorical material by which *Nkíta* and *n'kísi* are animated and activated. This is the "unseen but real power which comes from invisible sources, to produce a specific result", stated by Buakasa (1988).

Ambiguity

According to the circumstances, both *n'kísi* and *Nkíta* heal, but they also attack. In the case of *Nkíta*, harmful action is often seen by the members of the clan, as a premonition, a sign used by the ancestors to convey a message to their relatives of the visible world. This was the way *Makáya*'s illness was interpreted by her relatives. In the same way the judges at the Court of Justice interpreted afflictions and misfortunes in *Budyóóngo*'s clan.

Specific Action

Each *n'kísi* has its particular area where its power is operative, "some are for *kubúka* (healing procedures), some for *ngoombo* or *mpyaata* (divination), some for protecting and attacking". The specific nature of *Bankíta* action is expressed by a variety of techniques provided for each *mpoongo* (means and techniques for healing action) such as *Kiimpi*, *Ngúmbi*, *Manzanza*. Each refers to the specific illness, its diagnosis and the procedures for healing actions. Appropriate skills and knowledge are required for each area. This is one reason why initiation is required to become a healer. The candidate spends time at *vweela* (hut for healing and initiation), or beside an expert to be trained.

However, although similarities exist, it seems important to note that informants and healers all insist on a distinction to be made between *Bankíta/Nkíta* and *n'kísi*. The reason is that, nowadays, the negative aspect of the latter is held by most in the society.¹⁵ The positive meaning, that is, the healing action, has been completely replaced by the fear of destruction. People feel uncomfortable when using the term *n'kísi* to indicate healers whose action is connected with *Bankíta*'s power, because they

do not like to be taken as a *ngaanga-n'kisi* (sorcerer) whose influence seems to be always harmful.

The main difference between *n'kisi* and *Bankíta/Nkíta* is that the former can be created by whoever wishes, and they can be sold¹⁶ while the latter can never be manufactured or sold by human beings as instructed by the ancestors. My informants convincingly stated that only *bakúlu* (ancestors) are responsible for the way in which *Bankíta* are given to the clans in need of them.

To conclude this analysis of the concept of *Bankíta*, it can be assumed that *Bankíta/Nkíta* or *Mpoongo* constitute primarily the means inherited from *bakúlu* (ancestors) for *kutómá kú káánda* (well being and welfare of the clan). *Bankíta* are mainly reserved for sustaining life in a special way in the clan, for they enable *bakúlu* to be close to human beings, and to take care of them. *Bankíta* constitute a means by which invisible and visible worlds come together when healing rituals take place.

The following description of a healing ritual can be taken as an illustration of the concept of *Bankíta* in the *Mpangu* society. The ritual was performed by Pierre *Nsyóóná*, according to his status as *Táá Mfúmú Bánkita* (an invested chief with *Bankíta*'s power), in order to liberate *Makyéési*, a 17 year old girl who was suffering for two years from *Nyóká-N'káwu*, an illness which affects female fertility. The patient feels great pain in the bottom of her abdomen and in the back. She is believed to be unable to have children, since a "snake" is sucking her blood.

3.4. *Nyóká-N'káwu*

[The ritual took place on 10 April 1995 in the village ^{of} *Ngééba*, when a young girl *Makyéési*, also called "Mamy", accompanied by her mother, visited *Táá Mfúmú Bánkita* in order to have a healing session. This ritual can be divided into two phases:

Kusuunsula mbeefo (to introduce the sick person [to the healer] and
Kubúka (healing procedures).

3.4.1. *Kusuunsula mbeefo*

Generally this stage aims at creating a personal relationship between the sick person, his/her relatives, and the healer. The relatives introduce their patient to the healer, and ask him/her "*kubúka*" (to proceed with healing) the patient in order to free him/her from all kinds of bondage. Through the ritual of *kusuunsula mbeefo* the relatives of the sick person allow the healer to feel free regarding the way he/she is used in the healing action. The healer also proceeds to introduce the patient to his/her own *bakúlu* (ancestors) before taking any engagement for the healing action. He/she talks to them through *Bankíta* which are kept in a special place called *YALA*, in the house. The healer speaks to *bakúlu* (ancestors) to ask both permission and the appropriate methods for the healing action. This is a way for the healer to seek *bakulu*'s intervention and guidance. After introducing the patient, the healing action can take place. In the case of *Makyéési*, this stage of *kusuunsula mbeefo* had been done a week before when she was introduced for the first time. At the present séance, the healer "checked-up" the state of her health after the previous healing session.

About 10 a.m. *Makyéési* and her mother entered *Bankíta*'s house where *Táá Mfúmú Bánkita* was waiting for them. After greetings, the mother, kneeling on one knee before *Táá Mfúmú Bánkita*, said]:

"Here we come again." [Then looking at *Makyéési*]:

"Here is your patient, you can continue your work."

[*Makyéési* sat down on a little stool against the wall between her mother and me, facing *Táá Mfúmú Bánkita* who was sitting in his lounge-chair. All of us faced "*yala*" (the corner where *Bankíta* were kept in the house). Before starting the healing session, *Táá Mfúmu* explained to me what *Nyóká-N'káwu* is and how it works]:

"This girl is a victim of *Nyóká-N'káwu* which causes her great pain in her body. *Nyóká-N'káwu* is a two-headed snake,

Makyéési had taken a number of tablets and various remedies made from plants. In vain had her mother spent an amount of money to pay for these medications, but since she has been introduced to me, this snake must die. I asked her to keep coming here for treatment until she is healed, that is, until the snake dies. Otherwise she will be childless, since the snake continues to suck the blood which feeds the foetus. See how *Makyéési* suffers: during her menstrual period she has abdominal pains, she cannot eat or drink even water without feeling pain. This pain is caused by the snake sucking *Makyéési's* blood. This is the way *Nyóká-N'káwu* works. The length of period for cure depends on the success of the solutions I am giving her to take in order to kill the snake. As soon as it dies, the healing action is over. There, the special relationship between her and me ceases."

[Then *Makyéési* explained to me how she suffered]:

"I feel great pain in the bottom of the abdomen *kutatika ngolo* (to bite, to hurt strongly). Even now I am here, it bites into the back. This happens a few days before the beginning of my period, and continues during the period. I do not feel any interest in eating or drinking. When the period is over the pain terminates too. I have been suffering like this since I was 15 years old, now I am 17. The healing action here began a week ago. I hope *Táá Mfúmu* will heal me."

3.4.2. *Kubúka* (Healing procedures)

[Then came the time for *kubúka Makyéési*. During this phase the healer used his knowledge and skills for healing. Two methods were applied: *Kudyaatila* (to walk on the sick body in terms of massage), and *Kunwlika* (to give solution to be taken)].

a. *Kudyaatila*:

[First, the healer offered *nsáamba* and *káásu* to his *Bankíta*. *Táá Mfúmu* invited *Makyéési* to sit down on the floor, she stretched out her legs, *Táá Mfúmu* stood on them and started *kudyaatila* while he said]:

“Look! Regarding the snake:

Anyone who put it in the body of this girl,

Be it from *kitááta* (patrilineage), from *kimááma* (matrilineage, clan), from a friend, or from an enemy ...¹⁷

Truly, you, snake, I summon you to come out [of this body],

Leave this girl alone.

[My wish is] that this girl will be able to give birth, to rear, to pierce a lion, to pierce a leopard (that is, may she be strong)

[Be like] the lianas of the plant of beans¹⁸

It is not good that this young woman should endure the 12 sufferings¹⁹

She is too young to suffer so

May everything go successfully

I, I am doing *kudyaatila*

I do it from *kú nseki* (the land of the living)

I do it from *ku mása* (the land of the dead)

May she sleep soundly until the next morning.

You *Bankááka* (ancestors), could you help this girl?

We do not know where this snake comes from.
If it came from *Mfúmu Nzáambi* (Lord God) we accept the fact
But if it came from *bandoki* (sorcerers)
We ask you *Táátá Nzáambi* (Father God) to cast it out by your
power, since the girl has suffered for a long time”.

[*Makyéési* lay down on the floor. *Táá Mfúmu* put his feet on her shoulders, on her
back, her head and her abdomen. He continued]:

“I am doing *kudyaatila* according to your will
You, [*Bankááka*] (the ancestors) told me:
‘*Dyatá nitú yaakulu*’ (Walk on all the body) so that it becomes
light,
Walk on the abdomen, so that the snake will go out.
May she sleep soundly until the next morning!
Each country [has] an ancestor,
Each person [has] an ancestor!
I, I was invested with power by [my] *Bankááka* (ancestors), not
by myself
He, the Lord God, has chosen me for this work”.

[Three times *Táá Mfúmu* blew on his joined hands, then opened them and said each
time]:

“*Swáá!*”²⁰

[Holding *Makyéési* by the hands he helped her to stand up. He asked her to ^{stretch} stretch out
her arms, then legs three times]:

“*Telama!* (Stand up)

Tukula maalu ye móóko nkuumbú tatu! (Stretch out your legs
and arms, three times)

Kipú yaa! ... Kítuuka! (3 times)²¹

Ndá voonda! “(Go back to your seat)

[*Makyéési* sat down again on her little stool waiting for the second phase of cure: *kunwíika biima* (to drink medicines)].

b. *Kunwíika*

[The solution was already prepared in *kódi* (a shell of a snail), *Táá Mfúmu* showed it to *Makyéési* and said]:

“This *kódi* is inherited from *bambúta* (elders/ancestors).

It belonged to *Nkááká Nkyeesa*²², the foundress of the clan.

She left it and said: ‘This *kódi* is for providing births. It is *kódí dí mbóóngó múúntu* (the shell for progeny)’. May this girl, since she has drunk it, give birth to girls, and give birth to boys.

Truly, truly ..., now this young girl is drinking from the *kódi* ... Anyone who put this snake in her, be he/she from *kitááta* (patrilineage), from *kimááma* (matrilineage), *kinkááka* (grandparents’ lineage), an enemy, whoever ...

[Behold], thanks to this *kódi* the progeny will be born from this young girl when she gets married. This *kódi* will chase out the snake which causes her trouble.

May this girl sleep soundly until the next morning!”

[He hands *kódi* to *Makyéési* and asks her to drink from it three times]:

Nwá nkuumbú tátu! (Drink three times!)

[She drank the first time. *Táá Mfúmu* continued his incantations while she was drinking for the second time]:

“May she sleep soundly until the next morning!

Each country [has] an ancestor,

Each person [has] an ancestor.

To provoke [someone] is punishable, [to use] a knife is punishable.

One should not gaze at albino

Mfwáángá zí Nkita

Ndúúndu ye Mbaka

Drink from *kodi*, drink honourably.

Nwa! (Drink!) [3rd time]

May she sleep soundly until next morning!

*Nsáánsí lúkétí-kééngí*²³

On one side of the market things are sold

On one side of the market things are not sold

Mavwédí-vwedi

[What we want is] human progeny”.

[*Makyéési* returns *kodi* to *Táá Mfúmu*. He pours the solution on her head; gives back *kodi* to *Makyéési* and asks her to continue pouring the solution on her head while he says]:

“*Léémbí dí mpati, léémbí dí ngáánga*²⁴

Each country [has] an ancestor,

Each person [has] an ancestor.

To provoke [someone] is punishable, [to use] a knife is punishable

Léémbí-leembi

Tun’leembedí mpatí, tun’leembedí ngaanga

May she sleep soundly until the next morning

Mavwédí-vwedi

May everything end successfully

Swáá!

Kipú yaa! ... Kítuuka! (three times)

That is all!”

[Throughout the healing ritual of *Nyóká-N'káwu*, especially in the second phase, *kubúka* (procedures for healing), the healer was guided by his *bakúlu*; he showed in his attitude that they were with him conducting the ritual. From the beginning to the end of the ritual, there was communication between *Táá Mfúmu* and his *bakúlu*. He spoke to them, he invited them to work with him, to heal the young girl. Throughout the session, *Táá Mfúmu* showed he was carrying out *bakúlu*'s will. He obeyed them as he followed their instructions not only for the healing of *Makyéési* but also for serving the people in general.

The role of *Bankíta* in this ritual was to ensure *bakúlu*'s presence, and to make communication easier between them and *Táá Mfúmu* since they work together. The experience of (or the belief in) the presence of *bakúlu* on the spot of the ritual is essential to the patient, his/her relatives and the healer. This is the key to ritual efficacy, because everyone is guided by the same cultural principle that *bakúlu* are those who take care of individual and common well being and welfare in the society. This principle influences also the concept of the Twins whose ritual is described below.

NOTES

Chapter 3 : *N'kiku mi Bankita*

(The *Bankita* Rituals)

¹ *Basáwula*: She is *Makáya*'s sister and participant at the ritual of *Kutoombula Bankita* with her. She was interviewed on 25 March 1995 at *Nkáándu*.

² This is the usual way of becoming a healer under the power of *Bankita*: the sick person becomes the future healer. Each *Táá Mfumu* or *Máá Ndóóná Bánkita* (a Chief or a Lady endowed with *Bankita*'s power) interviewed about how they became so explained that he/she or a relative had been seriously ill for a long time. In vain had the members of the sick person's family sought healing. As soon as they discovered *Bakúlu*'s influence, they performed the rituals of *Bankita*. After being healed, the sick person went through an initiation in order to become a healer.

³ *Mbúdi, Manzanza, Léémbi, Wumba*: These are the names of some *mpoongo* (means for healing) to be used by the healer when treating patients who suffer from illnesses of the same name.

⁴ *Náá Kimbeembi*: This man was known as an expert regarding the work with *Bankita*. He was the one in charge of identifying *mpoongo* as well as for *kukóma siki* (empowering them).

⁵ *Vweela*: This term indicates both the ritual and the site where it takes place. This is a sacred enclosure often made of palm tree branches, outside the village. In the cities, the ritual can take place in a house instead of the enclosure. Only the participants are allowed to enter that area when the ritual is going on. The chief aim of this ritual is to heal the patient, and to prepare him/her for a special function in the community, such as a healer.

⁶ *Mpéemba* or *lugéemba* (white clay): is a symbol of innocence. Figures are painted with it on the bodies of the participants at *Vweela* to emphasise that they are, or must be, free from any evil influences. *Mpéemba* protects them from the influence of evil spirits. The fact that the bodies of the participants are painted with *mpéemba* connects them to *Mpéemba*, the land of the dead. This makes the communication between the two worlds easier. Related to *luyáálú lú Ntúúká Koongo* (the government in the clan according to the traditional model brought from *Kóóngó dí Ntúútilla* – the King's *Kóongo* – which is the birth site of *Bakóongo*), *mpéemba* is regarded as a special symbol used by *bakúlu* for nominating a new candidate to the function of chief. This was confirmed by several *Táá Mfumu bakulu* I interviewed namely, that when a man or a young boy repeatedly finds *mpéemba* on his body when he wakes up in the morning, it is interpreted as the call from *bakúlu* for him to carry out special functions in *kaanda* (the clan).

⁷ Numbers 9, 12, are related to 3 which is regarded as ritual number in matters of *Bankita*. Each important action or gesture must be produced three times. An idiomatic expression: "*Kitátú kí Nkita*" (lit: three [times] for *Bankita*) can indicate one of these three numbers.

⁸ "Flemish": A popular expression still in use today when *Bakóongo* speak about Belgian colonists.

⁹ *Budyóóngo*: A *Ndóóná Bánkita* and mother of Twins, interviewed on 21, 26 May and 2 June 1995 at *Nséke*.

¹⁰ *Nsímba, Nzuzi, N'laandu, Lukoombo, Ngisila, Kabátúmááko, N'suunda and Nduundu-Bwááka*: According to the *Mpangu* belief, these are different groups of spirits who are related to *bakúlu* and *Bankita*. Each group is named intentionally to ensure that no one is forgotten.

¹¹ *Kóonso*: One of the four days which compose the traditional week of *Bakóongo*. These are: *Nsóna*, *Kóonso*, *Nkéengi*, *Nkáándu*. Each day, except *Nkáándu* is chosen for the ritual of *Kuyáála* (installation of the new *Táá Mfumu báku*), to rule and take care of *kaanda* (clan). The members of each *kaanda* keep this in mind when the day comes. No one is allowed to accomplish important works in the field such as clearing, ploughing, sowing. Otherwise, *bakulu* are offended. *Táá Mfumu* and *Máá Ndóona* stay at home. This is a special day for them to communicate with *Bakulu*; they intercede for *kaanda*. The traditional week is among the values which are strongly held and alive in the *Mpangu* society. In the Catholic diocese of *Kisaantu*, the traditional week is kept side by side with the international week (Mon.-Sun.) in the publication of the calendar, each year.

¹² *N'kisi*: Although nothing has been said here about the double aspects of *n'kisi*, Van Wing's interpretation echoes the interpretation of the *Mpangu* regarding *mpoongo*. He wrote: "Il [*N'kisi*] signifie directement l'objet artificiel dans lequel 'est' un esprit 'dominé par un homme', (1959:383). (It is directly an artificial object in which dwells a spirit which is dominated by a human being). We say of *mpoongo* that they are sacred objects within the spirits of a special group of the dead dwell. Through the ritual of *kukóma siki* (to empower), these objects are controlled by the spirits of *bakulu*, and work under their power for *kutómá kú káanda* (the well being and welfare of the clan).

¹³ *N'simbu*: He is a *Táá Mfumu báku* of his clan. Interviewed on 8 March 1995 at *Mpése*.

¹⁴ *Kóongó*: It refers to *Kóongó dí Ntóótla* in Angola. See note number 6.

¹⁵ According to both the Catholic missionaries and the rulers of the country in colonial times, *n'kisi* were identified with evil, they were fought and destroyed by the same authorities. Therefore, a *ngaanga-n'kisi* was seen as a symbol of evil, an enemy.

¹⁶ During the period of my fieldwork research, I met only one healer, *I. Mpyóoso* who said he had bought his knowledge and techniques for healing illnesses related to female fertility, *Nyóká-N'káwu*, *Ngúmbi*, *Kiimpi*. The seller, *Mungambááwu*, belonged to a sub-group ethnic *Bamfunuka* of the *Téke* (neighbours to *Bakóongo*).

¹⁷ This is an example of *Mpangu* incantation. Its style is characterised by incomplete phrases which leave the idea in the air. The speaker is certain that the unsaid part of the phrase is known by his/her audience.

¹⁸ A wish for fertility: "*Kalá n'singa mí nkasa*". It is a proverb used as an idiomatic expression which illustrates an analogy between a person and the lianas of the plant *nkasa* (beans). The lianas must be themselves entangled in order to produce beans, and so should *Makyéési* be when she gets married.

¹⁹ "*Mpási 12*" said: "*Mpási kúumi ye zoole*" (twelve sufferings): An expression to indicate a great deal of suffering. Ex. *Mpási 12 bámona*: they have been suffering intensely.

²⁰ *Swáá!*: I could not get the meaning of this word. The healer utters it accompanied by hand gestures to ensure that the illness or misfortunes leave the body of the patient; they are sent away.

²¹ Appropriate formulae said in dialogue between the healer and the patient or the audience, to send misfortunes and evil influence far away.

²² *Nkááká Nkyeesa*: She is one of *Táá Mfumu*'s ancestors, the foundress of his clan.

²³ Several of these idiomatic expressions belong to an esoteric language reserved for specific areas of rituals. I could not obtain the meaning of these expressions.

²⁴ The meaning of these expressions is not clear. Nevertheless, the expressions refer to the way *Makyéési* was treated by *Táá Mfumu* to liberate her from *Nyóká-N'káwu*. He, *Táá Mfumu*, is regarded at the same time as *mpáti* (honourability, chief endowed with power) and *ngaanga* (initiated healer). All

he did during the healing action was influenced by these two aspects of his status. The meaning could then be that the ritual had been completed, nothing was omitted and therefore, there could be no doubt that *Makyéési* had been healed.

CHAPTER 4

THE HEALING RITUAL: *KUBÓÓNDA*

(Strengthening)

Kubóónda is one of the healing rituals related to *bansíimba* (twins) in *Mpangu* society. A reflection on the theme of the twins, their identity, their origin, and the specific role they play in the society, is helpful to penetrate *Mpangu* thinking in this particular matter. The twins exist in each society in the world. However, the interpretation of the phenomenon is a matter of cultural principles and belief.

In *Mpangu* society, *bansíimba* (the twins) are *baana ban'loongo* (children with whom special prohibitions are associated). This concept is repeatedly confirmed by the people on various occasions related to the twins. An appropriate repertoire of songs of praise for the twins, "*n'kúúngá mí bansiimba*" shows that they are special children. The reasons for regarding them as special children are not completely clear.

The phenomenon of *bansíimba* (the twins) should be studied in relationship to the concept of *bakúlu* and the world of the dead. Seen from this angle, MacGaffey (1986) interpreted the phenomenon of *bansíimba* in terms of reincarnations which allowed the dead to be recycled through this world in consonance with the concept of a reciprocating universe which is represented in *Kóongo* cosmology. *Bansíimba*, as well as certain of their siblings, and other "special" children (albinos, and those who are abnormal from birth), constitute the category of *baana ban'loongo* (children with prohibitions). In his analysis of the spiritual hierarchy of *Bakóongo* cosmology, MacGaffey classified *bansíimba* under the power of a superior spirit called *Funza* or *Bunzi* (Laman, 1962). This spirit is regarded by some groups of *Bakóongo* as the first creator of all charms. All twisted, stunted, or abnormal objects are attributed to this spirit. In this context, *bansíimba* are regarded as *baana bán'kisi* in the synonymic sense of *baana ban'loongo*. That is, the children linked to a variety of mysterious interventions from the world of the dead. According to the *Kóongo-Mpangu* belief, *bansíimba* (the twins)

are a special gift from *bakúlu*, the ancestors. This is a major concept which defines these children as *baana ban'loongo*, the children with prohibitions.

4.1. Performance of the Ritual *Kubóónda*

The following description of healing rituals illustrates the fact that *bansiimba* are “special” children, therefore, they are endowed with special power which enable them to heal other people. In the ritual examined here, they were asked to heal their own mother.

The term *kubóónda* [*ku-bo:nd-a*] means at the same time: to implore and to heal by means of massage, in order to strengthen the body. The two meanings merge when during the healing ritual, invocations (through songs and calls) accompany the healing action (massage, use of plants or solutions made of leaves or roots of certain plants).

The healing ritual *kubóónda* described below deals with two kinds of afflictions which needed to be healed. It was primarily performed on behalf of a young mother of twins whose knees were swollen. She could not explain the cause of her pain. Secondly, another woman, also mother of baby twins took the opportunity of participating in the ritual in the hope of improving the condition of her babies.

The ritual took place on 26 May 1995 at *Nséki*, a quartier of the agglomeration of *Léémfu*, 30 kilometres to the south of *Kisaantu*. The maternal grandmother of the twins and *A. Budyóóngo*¹ as senior expert, made the decision to perform the ritual. The way the ritual itself was performed combined two major parts: *Kukeembisa bansiimba* (to praise the twins), and *Kubóónda* (to strengthen).

4.1.1. *Kukeembisa Bansiimba*:

This part was provided for the praise to the twins and their mother. For this purpose the participants sang an important number of songs, one after another.

Early in the evening, several mothers of twins gathered in the open space before the house where the baby twins and their mother were living. A group of teenagers and children joined them. Without any introduction, the grandmother (herself a mother of twins) stood before the baby twins and their mother, and started clapping and singing the songs of praise for *bansiimba*. She was followed by the participants. The twins' mother sat on the mat placed on the floor in the middle of the circle made by the participants; she held her babies on her lap.

According to informants, these songs constitute a separate group of songs known as *n'kúúngá mí bansiimba* (songs for twins). They are sung at different events related to the twins' life: *mbutuka* (birth), *kubóónda* (to strengthen) when they are weak or ill, *yéemba* (mourning) when they die. On each of these occasions, the constant principle is *kukeembisa* (to praise) in order to make them happy. The *Mpangu* believe that this is a reason why a certain atmosphere of joy must characterise the celebrations. The words of the songs as well as the way they are sung are expected to produce joy. The song *Mbóte-mbóte* (greeting: hello! hello!) is always sung at the beginning to introduce the ritual while the song *Ntolokele kinkoombo* (I bow down as a goat [does] is used for its conclusion).

The texts of the songs below are a transcription of the songs of praise for *bansiimba* (twins) as they were sung during the healing ritual *Kubóónda* on the 26 May 1995 at *Nséke*. At my own initiative, each song is provided with a title, to facilitate references. The title is generally made of the first phrase, word, or name sung, or which is repeated by the chorus. Each song as well as each strophe/line is given a number. The text in *Kikóongo* language, printed in boldfaced characters, is followed by the translation into English. In some cases, only the English translation of the song-text is provided.



The young mother of the twins holding a leaf of *lémbá-lémba* between her lips during the ritual *Kubóónda*. (26 May at *Nséki*)

Song IV,1: *Mbóte, mbóte*

Solo: 1	<i>Mbóte, mbóte, mbóte!</i>	Chorus: <i>Mbóte</i>
2	<i>Mbóte yáá Nsíimba, mbóte!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
3	<i>Mbóte yáá Nzuzi, mbóte!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
4	<i>Mbóte yáá N'láádu, mbóte!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
5	<i>Mbóte betó kulu, mbóte!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
6	<i>Bóó baana ban'siku</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
7	<i>Mbóte maama na mapása!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>
8	<i>Mbóte Nsíimba ye Nzuzi!</i>	<i>Mbóte!</i>

Wéedí e!

E e!

Solo: 1	Hello, hello, hello!	Chorus: Hello!
2	Hello, <i>yáá Nsíimba</i> , hello!	Hello!
3	Hello, <i>yáá Nzuzi</i> , hello!	Hello!
4	Hello, <i>yáá N'láádu</i> , hello!	Hello!
5	Hello, all of us, hello!	Hello!
6	These children [are] children with prohibitions	Hello!
7	Hello, mother of the twins!	Hello!
8	Hello, <i>Nsíimba</i> and <i>Nzuzi</i> !	Hello!

[The song] is over!

Eh eh! (Yes)

Song IV,2: *Nyengi, nyengi*

Solo: 1	<i>Nyéngi, nyéngi, nyéngi!</i>	Chorus: <i>Nyenginina!</i>
2	<i>A kubúta ye kulela!</i>	<i>Nyenginina!</i>
3	<i>A bagéeni bááná bétó!</i>	<i>Nyenginina!</i>
4	<i>Nsíimba ye Nzuzi!</i>	<i>Nyenginina!</i>
5	<i>A bááná bá mapása!</i>	<i>Nyenginina!</i>

- 6 *Kubúta ye kulela!* *Nyenginina!*
 7 *Bagééni báábóódi!* *Nyenginina!*

Wéédí e! *E e!*

- Solo: 1 *Nyengi, nyengi, nyengi!* Chorus *Nyenginina!*
 2 Ah! [this is the joy of] giving birth and rearing! *Nyenginina!*
 3 Ah! We are given our children! *Nyenginina!*
 4 *Nsiimba and Nzuzi!* *Nyenginina!*
 5 Ah! [They are] twins! *Nyenginina!*
 6 [This is the joy of] giving birth and rearing! *Nyenginina!*
 7 We are given two children! *Nyenginina!*

Wéédí e! *E e!*

SongIV,3: *Kayaanga* (Be benefactor/benefactress)

[This song is sung to the parents of the twins, especially to the mother, about her behaviour. She is told what she is expected to do in order to satisfy her twins, and make them happy]:

- Solo: 1 *Kayaanga,*
E e kutula mbuunsu, kukáángí ko e
 Chorus: *Kayaanga, yááya e*
Kayaanga ku bááná bééto
 2 *É ngúdí báána, munu kayaanga*
Yáá yíímá gééni baana, kala ye kyéési e (Chorus)
 3 *Bááná boódi e, kayaanga*
E e munu izoláá ngudi báána e (Chorus)
 4 *Ba yaa Nsíimba e, kayaanga*
E se di baana
Ikubúkímína, ubuta dyááka e (Chorus)

- 5 *Ngudi báána e, kayaanga*
Yááya e,
Lumweesa ntoonda ku bá básíídi e (Chorus)
- 6 *Báábóódi e, kayaanga, yááya e*
Kayaanga ku ngúdí báána e (Chorus)
- 7 *Ngudi báána e, munu kayaanga*
Nkaaka bánsiimba
Kutula mbuunsu, kukáángi ko e (Chorus)
- Wéédí e!* *E e!*

- Solo: 1 Be benefactress one
 [Try to] have always an amiable expression, not a sullen one
 Chorus: Be benefactress, *yááya*
 Be benefactress with our children
- 2 Oh, mother of the twins, be benefactress
 Be joyful when you make a gift to them (Chorus)
- 3 [They are] two children, be benefactress
 Oh, I love the mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 4 Oh, twins! Be benefactors
 Father of the twins, I let you see my buttocks
 So that you may beget again [the twins] (Chorus)
- 5 Mother of the twins, be benefactress
 Oh, *yááya*! You must thank those who remain [alive] (*) (Chorus)
- 6 Two children!
 Be benefactress, *yááya*
 To the mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 7 Mother of the twins, be benefactress
 Grandmother of the twins,
 [Try to] have always an amiable expression,
 not a sullen one (Chorus)

Weedi e!

Eh eh!

[(*) The desire to thank one of the twins is expressed and sung in case of the death of a twin. The relatives and friends must not be too affected if one of them dies. On the contrary, much attention must be given to the one who remains alive. They should thank him/her for that. Any neglect can cause the death of the second twin. In the present case of *kubóonda* that is not applied. The line is sung as any other, it is part of the song].

Song IV,4: *Túúmbá bátuumba*

Solo: 1 *Túúmbá bátuumba ku masa e*

Túúmbá bátuumba kuna masa e

Chorus: *Túúmbá bátuumba e e*

E yááya, Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e

2 *Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e, túúmbá bátuumba*

Makala makyedika, makala ma luvúnu e (Chorus)

3 *Baana bétó yááya e, túúmbá bátuumba*

Ngwa, kwéékétáláláá ko, maama na mapása (Chorus)

4 *A baana ban'síku e, túúmbá bátuumba*

Kukádí kú nkééndá kó, maama na mapasa (Chorus)

5 *A baana bámo yááya e, e e e*

E yáá Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e (Chorus)

6 *Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e, túúmbá bátuumba*

Kukádí kú nkééndá ko taata na mapasa (Chorus)

7 *Ngola kuna mása e, túúmbá bátuumba*

Yááya e, yááya Nsíimba ye Nzuzi (Chorus)

8 *Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e, túúmbá bátuumba ku masa e*

Túúmbá bátuumba kuna mása e! (Chorus)

Wéedí e!

Eh eh!

- Solo: 1 They have been consecrated in the water
They have been consecrated in the water
- Chorus: They are consecrated
Nsímba and *Nzuzi*
- 2 *Nsímba* and *Nzuzi* are consecrated
Whether true or not (Chorus)
- 3 Our children *yááya*, are consecrated
Do not be difficult, mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 4 Children with prohibitions, they are consecrated
Do not be sad, mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 5 Ah! My children, *yááya*!
Eh! *Yáá Nsímba* and *Nzuzi* (Chorus)
- 6 *Nsímba* and *Nzuzi* are consecrated
Do not be sad, father of the twins (Chorus)
- 7 The catfish is consecrated, in the water
Yááya, yááya Nsímba and *Nzuzi* (Chorus)
- 8 *Nsímba* and *Nzuzi* are consecrated,
In the water, they are consecrated. (Chorus)
- [The song] is over! Yes!

Song IV,5: *Maloonga móódí-móódi*

- Solo: 1 *Maloonga móódí-móódi, e yááya*
E baana ban'loongo! Chorus: (Repetition of 1)
- 2 *Maloonga móódí-móódi, e yááya*
E bu tubutidi baawu (Chorus)
- 3 *Maloonga móódí-móódi, e yááya*
A buna mbakidi baawu (Chorus)
- 4 *Maloonga móódí-móódi, e yááya*
E yááya, keemba si tukeemba (Chorus)

- 5 *Maloonga móódi-móódi, e yááya*
A yáá, sakana si tusakana (Chorus)
- 6 *Maloonga móódi-móódi, e yááya*
Á á, buna mbweeni baawu (Chorus)
- 7 *Maloonga móódi-móódi, e yááya*
A yááya, kuna masa ma beeto (Chorus)
- 8 *Maloonga móódi-móódi, e yááya*
E buna butidi baawu (Chorus)
- 9 *Maloonga móódi-móódi, e yááya*
A yááya, ma tuzolaa beeto (Chorus)
- Weedi e!* *Eh eh!*

- Solo: 1 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 [These] are children with prohibitions Chorus: (Repeated 1)
- 2 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Eh! We have given birth to them [twins] (Chorus)
- 3 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Ah! I was given them (Chorus)
- 4 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Eh, *yááya*! We rejoice (Chorus)
- 5 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Ah! We are playing [we dance] (Chorus)
- 6 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Ah! When I saw them [the twins] (Chorus)
- 7 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Ah, *yááya*! In our water (Chorus)
- 8 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 As you have given birth to them [twins] (Chorus)
- 9 The dishes must be set out two by two, *yááya*
 Ah, *yááya*! That is what we like (Chorus)

Song IV,6: *Ku Mayeenga* (In the deeps)

Solo: 1 *Ku mayeenga e*

Yeka tunienginina maama na mapasa e

Chorus: *Ku mayeenga, e yááya*

Nsíimba ye Nzuzi e

2 *Ku mayeenga e*

Yeka tukembidila taata na mapása e (Chorus)

Solo: 1 In the deeps

Let us welcome and praise the mother of the twins

Chorus: In the deeps, eh *yááya*

Nsíimba and *Nzuzi*

2: In the deeps,

Let us praise the father of the twins (Chorus)

Song IV,7: *Baana beeto ban'loongo*

(Our children are children with prohibitions)

Solo: 1 *Baana beeto ban'loongo, e yááya!*

Chorus: *Mbila ku mayeenga!*

2 *Baana béeto báábóódi, e mááma!* (Chorus)

3 *Sukula Nsiimba, sukula Nzuzi, mu kyeese* (Chorus)

4 *Diika Nsiimba, diika Nzuzi, mu kyeese* (Chorus)

5 *Baana beeto ban'loongo, e mááma* (Chorus)

6 *Kabila Nsiimba, kabila Nzuzi, mu kyeese* (Chorus)

7 *Nata Nsiimba, nata Nzuzi, mu kyeese* (Chorus)

8 *Viika Nsiimba, viika Nzuzi, mu kyeese* (Chorus)

Wéédí e!

Eh eh!

Solo: 1 Our children are children with prohibitions

Chorus: The call from the deeps!

2 Our children are two, oh mother! (Chorus)

3 You must bath ^e*Nsímba*
you must bath ^e*Nzuzi*, joyfully (Chorus)

4 You must feed *Nsímba*, you must feed
Nzuzi, joyfully (Chorus)

5 Our children are children with prohibitions (Chorus)

6 You must make a gift to *Nsímba*
you must make a gift to *Nzuzi*, joyfully (Chorus)

7 You must hold *Nsímba*, you must hold
Nzuzi, joyfully (Chorus)

8 You must dress *Nsímba*, you must dress
Nzuzi, joyfully (Chorus)

Song IV,8: *Waya, Waya* (Be generous!)

Chorus: *Waya, waya!*

Solo: 1 *E búná íwáyá íwáyá e*

E ngwa bááná bóóle! (Chorus)

2 *E e ngudi báána e*

Bááná bóódi (Chorus)

3 *A búná íwáyá e*

E ngwa ngudi bánsiimba (Chorus)

4 *E búná tíwáyá tíwáyá*

E ngwa bááná bóóle! (Chorus)

5 *A yuna yi yáá Nsímba*

Ye yááya Nzuzi (Chorus)

6 *E baa yibááwu bobo e*

E ngwa batuzóláanga (Chorus)

7 *E widi yibááwu bobo*

E ngwa batusósáanga (Chorus)

- 8 *E yibááwu bobo*
E ngwa ngúdí bánsiimba (Chorus)
- 9 *Baana beeto ban'loongo*
Bákédi ku Nzáámbi (Chorus)

Weedi e !

Eh eh !

Chorus: Be generous!

- Solo: 1 I am trying ^{to} be generous
 Here [are] two children (Chorus)
- 2 Oh, mother of the twins
 There are two children (Chorus)
- 3 I am trying to be generous
 Oh, mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 4 We are trying to be generous
 Oh, mother! There are two children (Chorus)
- 5 Here [is] *Nsíimba*
 and *yáá Nzuzi* (Chorus)
- 6 Here they are
 The children we love (Chorus)
- 7 Here they are
 The children we are seeking (Chorus)
- 8 Here they are
 Oh, mother of the twins (Chorus)
- 9 Our children with prohibitions
 A gift from God. (Chorus)

At a given moment, a woman, (mother of twins) – we call her *Zoomba* – seemed disturbed by something. She sang faster than the other singers. She jumped before the baby twins, gazing at them while dancing. She was followed by two little girls of about ten and six years ^{of age}. They followed *Zoomba* with their eyes closed. The three of them turned around the baby twins and their mother. These actions indicated to the



Zoomba inhabited by the spirit of the Twins speaks in their name to assure their mother that she will be healed.

The two little girls (with their eyes closed) are also "inhabited" by the spirit of the Twins. (26 May 1995 at *Nséki*).

after p. 122

assembly that these three persons had been inhabited by the spirits of the baby twins; the inhabited persons were their mediums. *Zoomba* conducted the ritual into its second phase.

4.1.2. *Kubóónda*

This episode marked the beginning of the ritual *kubóónda* since the spirits of the twins seemed to be “present” in the assembly. Another mother of twins, *A Budyóóngo* (senior expert in *bankíta* and *bansíimba* rituals) acted according to her status as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* (see the chapter on *bankíta*) to introduce the ritual. She addressed the twins and said:

Kinkolo: “Beeto ka batúlókáá ko
Beeto ka tukwééndáángá kú n’kísi ko
Ka tukwééndáángá kú zimpúúngu ko
Beeto ka tukwééndáángá kú bítékí ko
N’siku tuna ye myááwu.
A bu beno ba yáá Nsímmba ye yáá Nzuzi
Buu maama kuulu bu kútólokele,
Mu nkí káléngíla?
A mu nkí kátékílá masa ma bééno?
A bwe kálúyémíkína?
Tuzolele lubuka maama yu ubéénu,
Mbasi katelama. Ndúúndu ...

We, we cannot be bewitched

We, we cannot have recourse to *n’kísi*²

We, we cannot have recourse to *zimpúúngu*³

We, we cannot have recourse to the statuettes of witches

You, *Nsímmba* and *Nzuzi*

Look at your mother’s leg, it is broken⁴

How can she walk?

How can she fetch water for you?
 How can she breast-feed you?
 Our wish is that you will cure our own mother,
 So that tomorrow she can stand up. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[She sprinkled palm wine, kola nut, *luzibu* and *toondo* (mushroom of love) in the four directions of the yard, on the baby twins and on the participants]:

Kinkolo: Here are *matóóndo*⁵ (mushrooms of love) for *Nsímba* and *Nzu-zí*. We offer them on behalf of your mother who cannot walk.

[*Zoomba*, the woman inhabited by the spirits of the twins began singing in a call-response style with the assembly]:

Song IV,9: *Nza lwíisa baana* (Come children [= twins])

Solo: 1 Oh! Come children
 Here are [your] kola nuts

Chorus: Eh, eh, eh *Ndúúndu* eh!

2 Oh! I insist, come children
 Here are kola nuts we love

(Chorus)

3 I insist, oh, come children
 Here are kola nuts

(Chorus)

4 Oh! I insist, come children
 Here is *luzibu*⁶ we love

(Chorus)

5 I insist, come children
 Here are [your] kola nuts

(Chorus)

6 Oh! come children
 Here is some palm wine

(Chorus)

7 Oh! I insist, come children

- Luzibu* is what they love (Chorus)
- 8 I insist, come children, come
Kola nut is what they love (Chorus)
- 9 Oh mother! Come children
Here is mushroom of love (Chorus)

[While she sang, she jumped and danced without any regular rhythm. This was interpreted as being led by an invisible power. People in the assembly moved to make space for her. When she felt breathless *Kinkolo* took over to lead the singing]:

- 10 Anyone who has not died the death of *nkíta*⁷
Cannot touch our *Nduúundu*⁸ (Chorus)
- 11 If you have not died the death of *nkíta*
Do not touch our *Nduúundu* (Chorus)
- 12 Oh! *Nduundu yááya*
This is what we are pleased with (Chorus)
- 13 Oh! Two children
We are pleased with them (Chorus)
- 14 I insist, come children
Here is some palm wine (Chorus)
- 15 Oh! Two children
They love some palm wine (Chorus)
- 16 Come children
Here is some palm wine (Chorus)

[The singing and jumping *continued* while *Zoomba* sprinkled the babies and the assembly with palm wine. The twins' mother was asked to lie on the mat (the babies were held by other women). *Zoomba* started *kudyaatila* (to massage with her feet). She poured out palm wine and *lémbá-lémba* juice on the swollen knees and legs. She massaged them one after the other, with her feet. Then she asked the patient to lie on her stomach, so that the medium could *dyaatila* on her back, her shoulders, and the back of her knees, in the same manner as it was done to *Makyéési* during the ritual *Nyóká-*



Zoomba performing *kudyatila* (massage with feet) to heal the young mother of the Twins. (26 May 1995 at *Nséki*)

N'káwu. While the medium proceeded with *kudyaatila*, *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* conducted the song]:

- 17 Oh! Mother *Ndúúndu*
Here are the kola nuts (Chorus)
- 18 Oh! We the *Ndúúndu*
this is what we are pleased with (Chorus)
- 19 Oh! Mother *Ndúúndu*
Here is the mushroom of love (Chorus)
- 20 You, if you did not die of *nkíta* death
Do not touch our children (Chorus)
- 21 You, if you did not die of *nkíta* death
Do not touch our *Ndúúndu* (Chorus)
- 22 Oh! *Ndúúndu*, oh! mother
That is what he/she is pleased with (Chorus)
- 23 Oh! Red *Ndúúndu*
That is what he/she is pleased with (Chorus)
- 24 We the *Ndúúndu*
That is what we are pleased with (Chorus)
- 25 Oh! Red *Ndúúndu*
Here is the mushroom of love (Chorus)

[From now, several songs succeeded without interruption]:

Song IV,10: *N'keenda Nsoni* (A story of shame)

[This song is performed to show the contradiction of the situation: the fact of having given birth to *bansíimba* (the twins) should be a joyful event especially for their mother. On the contrary, in this case, the mother is suffering. This is a story of shame. The song describes the way the twins' mother suffers]:

Solo: 1 I [try to] sleep, how can I sleep!

Chorus: A story of shame: the mother of twins
cannot sleep, She groans endlessly

- 2 Oh! Twins' mother
The twins' mother cannot sleep (Chorus)
- 3 Oh! Mother *N'tóómbó*
Mother *N'tóómbó*, how can I sleep! (Chorus)
- 4 Oh, mother! I groan endlessly
How can I sleep
The *nkíta* from the water does not sleep (Chorus)
- 5 I, when I [try to] sleep
I do not sleep (Chorus)
- 6 Oh, mother! She groans endlessly
The mother of twins
The mother of twins, how can she sleep! (Chorus)
- 7 Oh, mother! She groans endlessly
The mother of twins
The mother of twins, how can she sleep (Chorus)
- 8 I [try to] sleep, I [try to] sleep
How can I sleep! (Chorus)
- 9 The twins' mother
The twins' mother cannot sleep (Chorus)
- 10 *Yáá Nsímmba*,
Yáá Nsímmba has eaten ... (Chorus)
- 11 *Yáá Nsímmba*,
Yáá Nsímmba eats ... (Chorus)
- 12 *Yáá Nsímmba*,
When he/she sleeps or sits down ...
Yáá Nsímmba,
Yáá Nsímmba has eaten ... (Chorus)

[The assembly continued singing, when suddenly it was interrupted by a dialogue between *Zoomba*, the medium, and the assembly]:

Zoomba: I did this. *Ndúúndu ...* [She imitated a special manner of walking]

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: This is the way I was walking [laughed]

Kinkolo: Are you [the twins] or not?

Zoomba: Whether us or not, it does not matter. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [clapped] We will let you know later. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Let us pray. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [started singing, the assembly joined her]:

Song IV,11: *Lukwiika mwiinda* (Light your lamp)

[All the assembly sang together]

- 1 Light your lamp
 May they light their lamps
 These children do not like darkness, *bayááya*, ah, ah
- 2 Our children
 [Are] the children with prohibitions
 Our children, you must be the children with prohibitions
 These children do not like darkness, *bayááya*, ah, ah
- 3 Light your lamp
 Light your lamp
 These children do not like darkness, *bayááya*, ah, ah
- 4 *Nsiimba* and *Nzuzi*
 You must be children with prohibitions
 These children do not like darkness, *bayááya*, ah, ah.

[The people uttered joyful cries to express gladness, and to praise the twins].

Zoomba: Give me some *lémba-lémba*. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[She received a piece of *lémba-lémba* leaf. She held it between her lips so she could not sing properly with the assembly; she only murmured the tune. Then she said]:

Zoomba: She [the twins' mother] will be healed. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Perhaps she got an infection. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: She will be healed. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

This can be a lie!

Zoomba: We, we never tell lies. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Do you think this is *bandoki*'s intervention? *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: No, it is not *bandoki*'s intervention. She will be healed. Look at
Ndúúndu ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[She kept dancing around the twins' mother, and introduced the following song which she performed with all the assembly]:

Song IV,12: *Toonda Yéézu* (Love Jesus)

- 1 Love, love, love Jesus
Love God, o my soul
If you do not do it
Who else can fully praise [God] the Father?
- 2 Love, love, love Jesus

Chorus: *O yáá Yéézu*

Love God, o my soul

Chorus: O my soul!

If you do not do it

Who else can fully praise [God] the Father?

3 Follow your fathers

Reflect on it, my soul

If you do not do it

Who else can fully praise [God] the Father?

[Before starting song IV,11, *Zoomba* invited the assembly to pray: "*Tusaamba*" (let us pray). The song has been sung following the same theme of prayer. The song itself belongs to the local Christian Churches repertoire, especially *Dibuundu di Mpeeve a N'loongo* (the Church of the Holy Spirit), but the author of many songs in the society is unknown. The prayer can be interpreted as an invocation in order to ask for assistance of the invisible powers, as we have seen in section 3.4.2. before *Táá Mfumu* applied medicines to *Makyéési*. Although these two songs *Lukwiika mwiinda* (Light your lamp) and *Toonda Yéézu* (Love Jesus) do not originate from the repertoire of songs of praise for the twins, they are part of the ritual. They were introduced without breaking the general flow of the ritual. For the participants this is a form of expression only.

Flexibility and openness to change in African rituals have been pointed out by du Toit, B.(1985) as an important characteristic of indigenous therapeutic practice. To him, this is related to the mode of transmission, which is oral. The ritual, as well as many of its songs are not written. Everyone learns by listening during the performances. In certain more recent cases, the songs can be written, but the mode of performance remains flexible; each participant feels free to introduce a new theme or a variation of tune. This ensures the vitality of the rituals.]

Song IV,13: *Baana ban'loongo* (Children with prohibitions)

(Variant of Song IV,7)

Solo: 1 Oh *yááya*!

To you, mother of the twins

Chorus:[These are] children with prohibitions

Nsíimba and *Nzuzi*

2 Oh *yááya*!

To the mother of twins

(Chorus)

3 My two children

Let us welcome and praise

The mother of the twins

(Chorus)

4 My two children

Do not accept division

[They are] children with prohibitions

(Chorus)

5 Oh! My two children

Oh *yááya*! To you, mother of the twins

(Chorus)

6 Oh! My two children

there is no division [between them]

Oh! Mother of the twins

(Chorus)

7 Oh! Two children

Oh *yaaya!* To you, mother of the twins

(Chorus)

[Without break she went on singing the following song]:

Song IV,14: *Nyéngi, nyéngi* (Variant of song IV,2)

[This song is an expression of welcome and praise for the twins and their mother. It is accompanied by an appropriate dance of the same name. The woman-medium introduced it, followed by all the participants, whether standing or sitting on the mat placed on the floor. The dance is performed from the waist down, in a circular action].

Solo: 1 Ah, *nyéngi, nyéngi, yááya!*

Chorus: *Nyenginina*

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 2 | Let us welcome and praise our children | (Chorus) |
| 3 | Let us strengthen our children | (Chorus) |
| 4 | Let us strengthen our mother of twins | (Chorus) |
| 5 | Ah, <i>yááya!</i> Our children | (Chorus) |
| 6 | <i>Nyéngi, nyéngi, yááya!</i> | (Chorus) |
| 7 | Ah, <i>yááya!</i> Our children, <i>yááya!</i> | (Chorus) |
| 8 | <i>Nyéngi, nyéngi, yááya!</i> | (Chorus) |

[The leader introduced other songs without interruption]:

Song IV,15: *Kwékétáláláá ko* (Do not be difficult)

Solo: 1 Do not be difficult

Eh, do not be difficult, mother of the twins

Chorus 1: Do not be difficult

Eh, do not be difficult, o mother of the twins

- | | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 2 | Oh, mother of the twins, do not be difficult | |
| | Eh, do not be difficult with our children | (Chorus) |
| 3 | Oh, mother of the twins, oh, mother of the twins | |
| | Do not be difficult, mother of the twins | (Chorus) |
| 4 | Grandmother of the twins | |
| | Always have an amiable expression, not a sullen one | |
| | Chorus 2: Make gifts, <i>yááya</i> | |
| | Make giftsto our children | |
| 5 | We know you, mother of the twins | |
| | Always have an amiable expression, not a sullen one | (Chorus 2) |
| 6 | Mother of the twins, | |
| | Do not be sad, o mother of the twins | |

Chorus 3: Do not be sad, mother of the twins

Do not be sad, mother of the twins

- 7 Mother of the twins, do not be difficult
Oh, be happy with the two children (Chorus 2)
- 8 Oh, children ...
Oh, mother of the twins (Chorus 2)
- 9 Make gifts, mother of the twins
Be happy with our children (Chorus 2)

[Dialogue between *Zoomba*, the medium and the assembly]:

Zoomba: Keep singing! Look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We are proceeding to cure the twins' mother. *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[She sang for the second time the song *Nyéngi, nyéngi*, (IV,14).]

Zoomba: *Tukulukidi*. Look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [Looking at the twins' grandmother, who is also mother of the twins, she said]:

You, mother of the twins, since you came here, you did not greet us. We did not hear you saying: "*mbóte, mbóte, mbóte* (greetings). That is not the way we do it. *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Grandmother: I greeted you, *bayááya!* Didn't I?

I greeted all of you, *bayááya!*

Zoomba: To you mother *Kinkolo*. Look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[For the second time *Zoomba* sang the song IV,8: *Waya-Waya* (Be generous), with some additions]:

Solo: 10 Since I gave birth to the two [children],
I will not give birth any more

Chorus: Be generous, be generous

11 Since I gave birth to the two [children]
I will not travel [= I stay at home] (Chorus)

Zoomba: *Weedi e !* (It [the song] is over)

Assembly: *Eh eh!* (Yes)

Song IV,16: *Lusaamba n'kulu eno* (Evoke your own ancestor)

Solo: 1 Oh, mother! Evoke your ancestor
Do not evoke the children's ancestor

Chorus: Evoke your ancestor

Do not evoke your neighbour's ancestor

2 Evoke the twins' ancestor
Do not evoke your neighbour's ancestor (Chorus)

3 You, the twins, evoke your ancestor
Do not evoke your neighbour's ancestor (Chorus)

4 Oh, mother! You, twins, evoke your ancestors
Do not speak to other people's ancestors (Chorus)

5 Evoke your ancestors
Do not evoke other people's ancestors (Chorus)

6 Oh, *Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi*, evoke your ancestors
Do not evoke other people's ancestors. (Chorus)

7 *Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi*, evoke your ancestor
Do not evoke your neighbour's ancestor (Chorus)

8 Evoke your ancestors
Do not speak to your neighbour's ancestors (Chorus)

[*Zoomba* produced a sound similar to that made by goats: hum-hum-hum, then said]:

Zoomba: *Tukulukidi. Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: It is us. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We are *Nsímba* and *Nzuzi*. We came on visit to our mother. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [Produced the same sound as at the first time, and sang]:

Song IV,17: *Lúyúúléti* (Ask questions)

Solo: 1	Ask where is he/she from	Chorus: <i>A yááya!</i>
2	Ask me where I am from	(Chorus)
3	You, <i>yáá Nsímba</i> , where are you from?	(Chorus)
4	He/she is not dead yet, put again to death	(Chorus)
5	You, <i>Bankíta</i> , keep him/her in your mind	(Chorus)
6	Oh, <i>Nkítá N'ziinga</i> , release them	(Chorus)
7	Hum, hum, hum, hum	(Chorus)
8	<i>Nkíta</i> and <i>Nsímba</i> , where are you from?	(Chorus)
9	We, the twins, where are we from?	(Chorus)
10	We live at <i>bisíinsa</i>	(Chorus)
11	We sleep in <i>mayeenga</i> (the deeps)	(Chorus)
12	Anyone who has not died the <i>nkíta's</i> death, Put him/her again to death	(Chorus)
13	Hum, hum, hum	(Chorus)
14	Oh, <i>Nkítá N'ziinga</i> , release him/her	(Chorus)
15	He/she is not dead yet, Put him/her to death again	(Chorus)
16	He/she is not dead of <i>nkíta's</i> death, It is a lie	(Chorus)
17	It is day, it is night	(Chorus)
18	He/she is not dead of <i>nkíta's</i> death, He/she is joking	(Chorus)

- 19 *Kitáúú kí nkíta* (the number “three”) (Chorus)
required by *nkíta* must be played

Song IV,18: *Baana ban'loongo* (Variant of song IV,13)

Chorus: [They are] children with prohibitions

Nsíimba and *Nzuzi*

Solo: 1 Oh, two children

I do not accept any division: they are twins (Chorus)

2 I bring a gift to *Nsíimba*,

I bring a gift to *Nzuzi* (Chorus)

Zoomba: Keep singing. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: You, mother of the twins, leave this place. *Ndúúndu*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

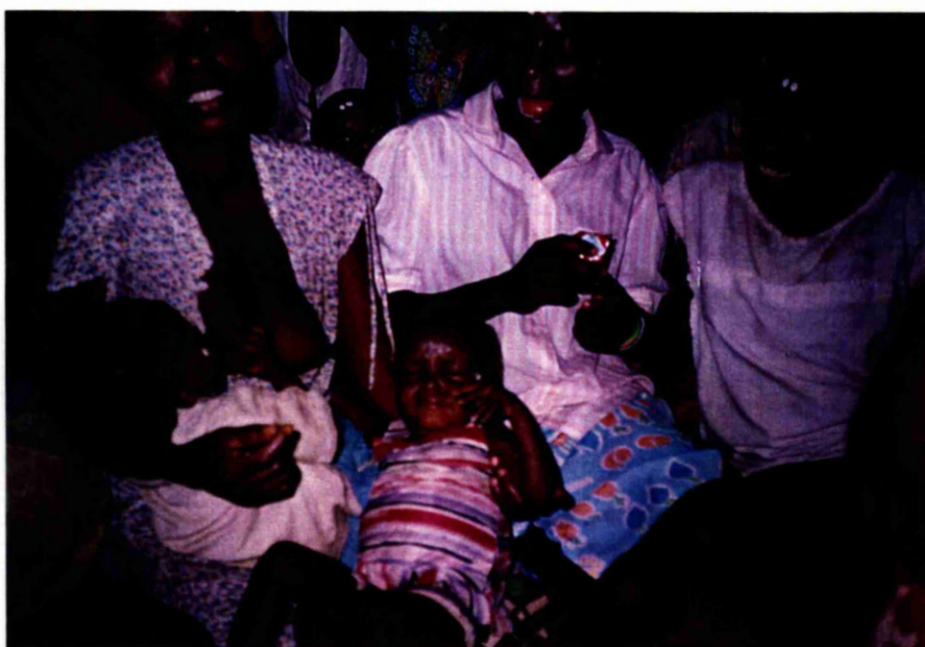
[The young mother of the twins left her place, and joined the assembly. Another mother of twins replaced her on the mat, holding her babies on her lap. These children were judged to be slow in walking. The responsibility for his brother's bad health was attributed to his twin, *Nsúmba*. Their mother brought them into this healing ritual hoping that they would be cured by their own spirits, so that they could soon start toddling].

Zoomba: *Tukulukidi.* Look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: I will give you this song. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*



The second pair of Baby-Twins. One of them (on the right) is accused of being the cause of his twin-brother's poor health. (26 May 1995 at *Nséki*).

Song IV,19: *Ku mayenga* (In the deeps)

[Variant of song IV,6]

Solo: 1 Eh! these children are difficult [to rear]

Chorus 1: In the deeps, eh *yááya*

These children are difficult. In the deeps

2 Eh! These children are difficult (Chorus)

3 In the deeps, *yááya*

These children are difficult (Chorus)

4 These children are jealous (Chorus)

5 Oh, mother, observe: they are twins (Chorus)

6 *Nsímba* and *Nzuzi* (Chorus)

Zoomba: *Tukulukidi.* Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: This song is theirs, they inspired it [to me]. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[She continued singing]:

7 We, children, we are difficult (Chorus)

8 They came from the deeps

These children are difficult (Chorus)

9 In the deeps, eh *yááya*

Give me my money

Chorus 2: In the deeps, eh *yááya*

Give us our money back

10 In the deeps, *yááya*

Give me my money back (Chorus 2)

11 In the deeps, ye, ye, ye

Give me our *kúta* (Chorus 2)

12 In the deeps, ye, ye, ye
Give me back my money (Chorus 2)

13 In the deeps, *yááya*
Give me back our money

Chorus 3: In the deeps, eh *yááya*
The Borrower is not here

14 In the deeps, *yááya*
Pay back our *makuta*

Chorus 4: In the deeps, *yááya*
The one who must pay them is not here
In the deeps, *yááya*
You will pay them yourselves

15 They came from the deeps
They came two by two (Chorus 1)

16 From the deeps, *yááya*
We came two by two (Chorus 1)

[The ^{singing continued} repeating the line: *Luvutula mboongo zéto* (Give our money back). Then *Zoomba* stared at the baby *Nsímba*]:

17 In the deeps, *yááya*
This child is difficult (Chorus 1)

18 In the deeps, *yááya*
This *Nsímba* is difficult

Chorus 5: In the deeps, *yááya*
Yáá Nsímba is strong

19 In the deeps, *yááya*
This *Nsímba* is *ndoki*

Chorus 6: In the deeps, *yááya*
This *Nsímba* is *ndoki*

[Roughly *Zoomba* teased the twin *Nsiimba*. The baby was afraid and cried loudly. She continued to poke the baby while the assembly kept singing. The medium sprinkled palm wine and *lémbá-lémba* juice on the two baby twins. She blew on *Nsiimba* and said]:

Zoomba: Wéédí e!

Assembly: *Eh eh!*

Zoomba: [sang]: *E nza lwílsa baana* (Come children) [Song IV,9]

[Meanwhile, she proceeded to perform *kudyaatila* (to massage with her foot) the baby *Nsiimba* in terms of *kuboonda* (to cure and strengthen) the baby. When she stopped singing, she said]:

Zoomba: Wéédí e! ([The song] is over)

Assembly: *Eh eh!* (Yes)

Zoomba: All problems come from him [she pointed out *Nsiimba*]. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: I, *Nzuzi* wish to walk. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We feel dragged down. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: He, [*Nsiimba*] does not agree. He is holding me till we can walk together.
Ndúúndu ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Actually, we have already walked. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [He says to me]: “*Kwééndí ko*” (do not go). *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: “*Kiinga munu*” (wait for me). Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [Sang]: *Luvutula mboongo zéto* (Give our money back).

Chorus: In the deeps, *yááya*

Give us back our money

Zoomba: On the way, on coming home ... *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Someone: That money has already been paid. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Someone: Which money must be paid again? *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Another: Maybe the amount was not enough. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: I told you, thirty four *makúta*⁹

Someone: I already paid it

Zoomba: [sang some verses of the song IV,17]:

Solo: 20 We sleep at *bisúnsa* Chorus: *A yááya*

21 Oh! *Nkitá N'ziinga* release the children (Chorus)

22 Eh, it is day, it is night (Chorus)

Zoomba: To you, mother of the twins. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We agree with your concern. We thank you. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: You questioned us. You said: We must know why these children are so often ill. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Why can't they walk. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Here is our answer. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: These are children with prohibitions. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We examined [the situation]. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We looked closely; this is what we saw. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Eh, eh! [She turned the baby in different positions]. It is he, who causes problems. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Nothing else. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [sang]:

E ngwa maa maambu kwé malééléengi e? Chorus: *A yááya!*

Ku yáá Nsímba ku malééléengi e (Chorus)

E ngwa yáá Nsímbá úna maambu e! (Chorus)

Oh, mother! Where the problems are?

The problems lie in [the baby] *Nsímba*

The problems lie in [the baby] *Nsímba*

Zoomba: *Tukulukidi. Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: He [*Nsímba*] wishes the two children to start walking at the same time.
Ndúúndu ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: *Nzuzi* says: "No, I would like to walk".

Nsímba says: "We must wait for each other". *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: During the night, he [*Nsímba*] drags me down. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: There is nothing wrong. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Someone: Who borrowed the money?

Zoomba: Good question, mother of the twins. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: This happened on the way when they came. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We came, we came, we came. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We arrived at *Mpáámbú Nkama* (hundred crossroads). *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: It was there we met: he was coming from this side; I was coming from that side. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: The two of us met and entered into our mother's womb. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: He had no money for the ticket. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Hum, hum, *Nsíimba* had his money for the ticket; *Nzuzi* had not. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: That is why he [*Nsíimba*] blames him [*Nzuzi*]. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: That is why they [*Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi*] inspired this song: "*Luvutula mboongo zéto*" (Give our money back).

Someone: We agree to pay that money, provided they stand up and walk. As soon as they stand up we will pay their money. May they walk from now on! According to our currency, we will give 1,000 Zaire at least. As soon as they stand up, we will hand in the money.

Zoomba: Ah ah, we will walk. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: These are their *n'kisi* of the clan; they have always existed. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Someone: May these *n'kisi* be used while you are curing.

Zoomba: [Sang]: Evoke your ancestor

Do not evoke other people's ancestor [Song IV,16]

Mother *Kinkolo*, do you agree with me? *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

[Till now, the ten year old girl who was also inhabited by the twins' spirits had not said anything. *Zoomba* spoke to her]:

Zoomba: You, *yáá Nzuzi*, since coming here you have not said anything. Why don't you speak? *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: Why did you come if you do not intend to speak? I, I spoke for too long
Ndúúndu ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: It is almost time to leave. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: Eh, eh, *yáá Nsímba*, do not do that. We came together, we will leave together too.

Someone: Raise your voice, please! Many of us wish to learn something from you. We are happy to hear your words. Although we are not in good state of health ourselves, we came here for the sake of these two children.
Ndúúndu ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: Surely, I will cure you [she laughed]. Do you think I am unhappy? No, I am not. This is the way we behave when we come together. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: I am listening to you. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: [Whistled]

Zoomba: Hum, hum! Have you finished? Can we leave now? Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: Wait for a moment. We have not healed [our] mothers yet. They are still waiting here. Do not leave.

Zoomba: [Getting nervous] It is too late. Look at *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: Yes, we will leave soon. Wait, because we must cure [our] other mothers. Do not leave *Nsímba*. I see someone [special]. He may be a *Táá Mfúmu*. [There was a child who was one or two years old with an enormous and disproportioned head]. We must *dyaatila* him. Stay, *Nsímba*, do not leave. Be careful.

[Two of them proceeded to cure all the mothers of the twins present at the ritual. In turn, each sat on the mat, she indicated parts of the body where she felt pain. The two mediums poured out some palm wine and *lémba-lémba* juice, and massaged with her hands. During this section of ritual, songs were sung by a group of teenage girls]:

Song IV,20: *Mbadi Maa N'tóómbo*

- 1 Oh, mother *N'tóómbo*
Come and see me, [so that] I can sleep, *yááya*
2. If I die on the crossroads
The running water of the rain will give me a burial, *yááya*
- 3 Oh, the child [daughter] of
Mother *Biyélá bí mpóóngo*, *yááya*
- 4 The day you bring out *mpoongo*
Come and see me, [so that] I can sleep, *yááya*
- 5 Mother *N'tóómbódí Mpóóngo*
Come and cure me, [so that] I can sleep, *yááya*

Song IV,21: *Maa N'tóómbo kaléékáá ko*

(Mother *N'tóómbo* does not sleep)

[Variant of Song IV,10)

Solo 1: Mother *N'tóómbo* does not sleep
She cries endlessly

Chorus 1: Mother *N'tóómbo* does not sleep

- 2: She cries endlessly, oh mother
 Mother *N'tóómbó* has eaten
 What is produced by other people

Chorus 2: Oh, mother *N'tóómbó*,
 Mother *N'tóómbó* has eaten
 What is produced by other people

- 3: We say:
 Mother *N'tóómbó* cries endlessly (Chorus 1)

Song IV,22: *Kimbéémbi*¹⁰

- Solo 1: *Kimbéémbi* went to have a bath
 Do not take me for a young person [without experience]

Chorus: *Kimbéémbi, yááya*
 E, *yaaya*, keep the prohibitions

- 2: There are two *bimbéémbi*
 Do not ask me questions (Chorus)
- 3 Eh, *Kimbéémbi* is a bird of bad augur
 Eh, mother, you have heard the problems (Chorus)
- 4 I have had a spokesperson who used to speak on my behalf
 You have heard these problems (Chorus)
- 5 There are two *bimbéémbi*
 You have heard the problems (Chorus)
- 6 The wisdom of the healer [must be known] at the beginning
 Do not lie on my behalf (Chorus)

Song IV,23: *E Nkítá Waamba*

- Solo 1: Eh *nkíta, nkíta, Waamba*

Chorus: O *ngaanga*, appease [it]!

- 2: *Nkíta*, to me [this is] *nkíta Waamba* (Chorus)
- 3 Our children, come up [from the water], come to us (Chorus)

- 4 [For] these children, it is cold in the water (Chorus)
 5 Oh, mother, to me [this is] *nkitá Waamba* (Chorus)
 6 Oh, mother, to me [this is] *nkitá N'ziinga* (Chorus)

Song IV,24: *Baana beeto ban'loongo*

- Solo 1: Our children [are] children with prohibitions, *bayaaya*
 Our children [are] children with prohibitions
 Chorus: May our heaven shake (Shake)
 Enlighten our hearts (Our hearts)
- 2: Our children [are] children with prohibitions, *bayaaya*
 You must be children with prohibitions (Chorus)

Zoomba: *Wéédí e!*

Assembly: Eh eh!

Zoomba: We came from far away!

Song IV,25: *Maa N'tóombo tómbokedi*

- Solo 1: Oh, mother, mother *N'tóombo* came up
 She has heard a nice voice
 Oh, mother, where we came from
 [There is] endless groaning Chorus: *E yááya!*
- 2: Oh, mother, this *n'kísi* came out
 It has heard a nice voice
 Oh, *yááya* where we came from
 [There is] endless groaning (Chorus)
- 3 Oh, mother *Myéési* always shines (Chorus)

Song IV, 26: *Mbuundu kuna mása*

Father *ngaanga*, oh father

[My] heart is longing for the water, *bayááya*

The sorcerers dance through the young leaves of the palm tree

[*Zoomba* wanted to end the ritual, but she had to wait for her colleague, the medium, whom she called *Nzuzi*]:

Zoomba: Mother *Kinkolo*, look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: She came late. *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: It is time to leave this place. Look at *Ndúúndu* ...

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Kinkolo: Do not act nervously. It is time to leave the place.

Girl: Could you sing a couple of songs for me?

Someone: We have a visitor here with us; she has to leave now because she has far to go.

Zoomba: [Started singing]:

Song IV,27: *Makaanda tukwééleembi*¹¹

Solo 1: We are trying to appease the clans, *yaaya*

Oh, *léembí-leembi*

Chorus:(Repeated 1)

2: We are trying to appease the clans,

Oh mother *N'tóómbódí Mpóóngo*

Léembí-leembi

(Chorus)

3 We are trying to appease the clans,

Be happy with the two children

(Chorus)

4 We are trying to appease the clans,

Father *ngaanga*

Ah, *léembí-leembi*

(Chorus)

- 5 We are trying to appease the clans,
Be peaceful
Eh, *léémbí-leembi* (Chorus)
- 6 We are trying to appease the clans,
Mother *N'tóómbódí mpóóngo*
Nkitá Leembi (Chorus)
- 7 We are trying to appease the clans,
Mother *Ndúúndu*
Nkitá Waamba (Chorus)
- 8 We are trying to appease the clans,
Be joyful with *léémbí-leembi* (Chorus)
- 9 We are trying to appease the clans,
Be joyful with *ngaanga Leembi* (Chorus)

[One verse added to the song IV,23: *Nkitá Waamba* was sung]:

Oh, mother *N'tóómbódí Mpóóngo*

Come and see me.

Girl: *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: That is all. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: I came for the praise of *yáá Nsímmba* and *yáá Nzuzi*

We came from very far away. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Girl: Thank you. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Kinkolo: We ask you, *yaa Nsiimba* and *yaa Nzuzi*, is it time to leave? *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: We are ready to leave. Look to *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Thank you!

Zoomba: [She sang the following song]:

Song IV,28: *Ntolokele kinkoombo* (I bow down as goats do)

Solo 1: I bow down as goats do, *yááya*

Oh, *yáá Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi*

Chorus: Oh, *yááya*, I bow down as goats do

Oh *yáá Nsíimba* and *Nzuzi*

2: Oh, *yaaya*, I bow down as goats do, *yááya*

I strengthen our children

(Chorus)

[The same verses were repeated several times while everybody knelt and, following the rhythm of the song, the participants touched the ground with their elbows, knocking three times on the ground with each elbow in turn. This song as well as the gesture, constitute a symbolic expression of begging forgiveness of the twins. The members of the family of the twins and friends do this to ensure that the two children are happy despite mistakes made unconsciously during the ritual or at any other time during the lives of the twins, before birth or after. This song concluded the ritual *Kubóonda* which lasted about four hours. From then on everyone was free to leave the yard and go home; the ritual was over. The persons who had served as mediums remained silent. They went home without saying anything].

The celebration of the ritual *Kubóonda* liberated the young mother of the twins, and their relatives from the anxiety caused by fear that *bakúlu* might be unhappy. The fact that the mother of the twins knees had suddenly swelled was interpreted as a warning from the ancestors. That is what *Zoomba*, the medium, tried to find out before she proceeded to cure by applying *kudyaatila* (massage with her feet).

Obviously, the kind of healing sought affects both the physical and the social aspects of life. Actually, two days after the healing ritual *Kubóonda*, the young mother of the twins recovered full use of her legs; she could walk properly. When all the family was satisfied by the rituals performed for the sake of the baby twins, and for her, according

to her new status of mother of twins, she joined her husband in Brazzaville, after staying about five months in her village.

In the following sections, I would like to comment on the elements which link the twins with the healing ritual in order to define their role. To do so, I will first analyse the concept of the twins in the *Mpangu* society.

4.2. The Role of the Twins in the Healing Rituals

Throughout the healing ritual *kubóonda* the expression *baana ban'loongo* (children with prohibitions) occurred repeatedly in the songs which accompanied it (Songs IV,3; IV,5,IV,11 and IV,17). This repetition was also a warning addressed to the parents (especially the mother), relatives and friends of the twins, for the birth of the twins does not only affect their own nuclear family. It is more of a social event than a private one.

It is commonly believed by the *Mpangu* that the twins' healthy growth in childhood and subsequent successful development depend upon how carefully the parents and relatives observe all the taboos concerning them. Everyone is expected to conform to these social rules, and the society relies on the blessing from the ancestors to whom the twins belong. The belief in the special origin of the twins sustains people in accomplishing their duties towards these "mysterious" children.

The appropriate songs of praise for the twins, and those which accompany the ritual carried out for their sake, remind everyone of his/her obligations towards these children and their siblings.

4.2.1. An Ambiguous Phenomenon

It is generally implied that the statement "*baana ban'loongo*" hints at the idea that it will be difficult to rear these children. This idea was clearly expressed in song IV,12: *bóó baana mpási béna* (these children are difficult [to rear]). The difficulties can be considered from three angles: religious, social and material levels.

1. Religious Aspect:

My reflection on the religious aspect of the phenomenon of the twins refers to that reported by V. Turner,(1991) considering the paradoxes of the twinship in Ndembu ritual. Twinship, according to Turner, was regarded by the Ndembu simultaneously as a blessing and a misfortune for the society. The bearing of twins constituted for these people a paradox, that is, a thing that conflicted with preconceived notions of what was reasonable or possible. Turner analysed this concept in terms of absurdities on different levels: physiological, cultural and economic. Culturally, the twins were symbolically represented in the ritual as a burden upon the community.

By contrast, the *Mpangu* welcome the twins as a gift from the invisible world of the ancestors. However, no one among my informants could explain clearly how this gift is given to the members of the clan. In many cases, it is the twins themselves who have to tell their own story to the parents and relatives. I have not witnessed any case of the twins telling their own story, but the parents did it on the twins behalf. This happens especially in the context of a ritual, as we have seen in the ritual *kubóonda*. *Zomba*, the medium, explained the way the two babies became twins, she said:

We came, we came, we came. We arrived at *Mpáámbú Nkama* (hundred crossroads). It was there we met: he was coming from this side; I was coming from that side. The two of us met and entered into our mother's womb.

Song [IV,17] was sung in the same line of thought in order to tell the assembly where the twins came from. The dispute about the money borrowed by one twin (Song IV,19: verses 9-14) helps also to describe the peculiar identity of the twins as being children who have a double life synchronically (one before and another after their birth), and diachronically (actually they look like babies [in the visible world], but they are adults in the other world). *Zomba* said: "Actually, we have already walked".

This alien behaviour leads the *Mpangu* to regard them as "special" children. This singularity can be linked with their origin and their names. For example: attempting to

define the origin of the twins, the *Mpangu* use vague terms to indicate the place where the twins come from:

Ku mása (from the water) [Song IV,23]: this term refers to the land of the dead where life continues. It is a land of gladness and comfort (Laman,1962).

Ku mayeenga (from the deeps) [Songs IV,17 and IV,19]: these are feared places where certain spirits of the dead dwell. They constitute special categories of spirits: *bissímbi, nkíta*.

Ku bísiinsa (?) [Songs IV,17 and IV,19).

The first two terms are also used when people speak of the dwelling of *bakúlu* and children linked with the twins (albinos, abnormal children from birth). Regarding the names, the twins are the only children who have their own name at birth; they do not receive it as normal children do. This is further evidence of the common belief that the twins, in *Mpangu* society, are “mysterious” children.

For the *Mpangu*, the phenomenon of the twins is a fact. They take it for granted, they do not need explanation. The questions about their meaning, their influence, their power come from outside the community. To answer these questions, people refer to the evidence of the fact rather than to the precise concept of the twins.

The above considerations show why the *Mpangu* believe that these “special” and “mysterious” children are endowed with special power stemming from the invisible world. This can be an acceptable explanation of the reason why the baby twins were asked to heal their own mother whose knees were swollen, and to strengthen other mothers of twins. It is likely, that it was expected of the second set of baby twins that their own spirits would heal and liberate them from any cause of weakness in order that they could walk as soon as possible.

To understand the religious aspect of the role played by the twins during the ritual *Kubóonda* it is important to remember the definition that best describes the concept of religion among the *Mpangu*, that is, communication with the invisible powerful beings

which affect life. We have seen that, in some way, the twins are part of these invisible powers, because they are believed to be closely connected to *bakúlu* (ancestors). As mentioned above, this was especially the reason why they were asked to heal their own mother, and to strengthen other mothers of twins. In the same way, during the ritual *Kiziku*, *bakúlu* were asked to heal patients, to bless the assembly [and hence, the clan] through the role played by *Táá Mfumu*. Words, gestures, actions and specific messages uttered by the medium were interpreted as coming from *bakúlu*, during the ritual *Kiziku*, and from the spirits of *bansiimba* (the twins), during the ritual *Kubóonda*.

The “presence” or participation of the spirits of the twins in the ritual was the most important goal which was to be achieved by the participants, in order to make the performance of the ritual a religious reality. This participation moved the ritual from merely a human action in the visible world – such as *kukeembisa bansiimba* (praising the twins), to an expression of communication with the invisible beings which is regarded by the *Mpangu* as religious expression of their beliefs.

We have seen that thanks to the peculiar identity of the twins, that is, to the fact that they are children who enjoy at the same time synchronical and diachronical life, the twins are believed to be endowed with power from the invisible world while at the same time they live as members of the visible society. This combination of identities renders it difficult to make a clear distinction between what can be purely religious from the social aspects. In fact, the religious is often hidden behind the social actions and attitudes. Songs IV,5 and IV,7 for example, emphasise parents’ and relatives’ attitudes regarding the twins: an equal relation, an equal love expressed for each child.

It is true that a series of taboos and of prohibitions, prescribed attitudes and actions constitute a religious burden. They are primarily connected with the social behaviour of the parents and relatives of the twins as expressed in song IV,3. Generosity and joyful amiability, to name but a few qualities, improve relationships among the members of the community in the society at large, and hence ensure harmony. In song IV,7 the emphasis is especially placed on the harmony between the twins and their relative,⁵ clearly expressed in song IV,13 v.4 “these children do not accept division”.

These examples show, once again, that the *Mpangu* concept of religion is not separated from daily life; religion is a lived experience. Furthermore, when discussing the phenomenon of the twins among the *Mpangu*, people speak of the social rather than of the religious aspect which is taken for granted.

2. Social Aspect:

On the social level, it is important to remember that the concept of the twins in the *Mpangu* society can be primarily thought of in terms of a favour. It is the opposite of Turner's equation that $2=1$, which was judged by the Ndembu as mysterious and absurd. His analysis led to the statement that the birth of the twins was a source of classificatory embarrassment, since the two children are mystically identical. There is only one slot for them to occupy in the social structure. Turner extended the case to many other societies facing this kind of problem. They tried to resolve the dilemma by negative solutions, in the sense that either they destroyed the personality of the twins by changing their social status or put them to death (Turner,1991).

Conversely, in the case of the *Mpangu* society, the equation is read as $1=2$. That is, one delivery provides two children for the clan. We must bear in mind that the clan is the basic principle of the social structure of the *Mpangu*. Fertility is a major concern and highly valued. Each child born is welcomed by the society as a guarantee of the survival of the clan. The twins ensure twice this guarantee for the clan, for its existence depends on the great number of new members. Therefore, the twins are a form of social security. Further, fertility constitutes an important criterion which determines the social position of a woman. This is one reason why the mother of the twins is highly praised in the same way as her children (Song IV,5). The fact that she has given birth to the twins changes her social status; she ascends to a special rank. She becomes an object of common concern as expressed in song IV,10.

Kutómá kú mákáánda (well being and welfare of the clans) guarantees the prosperity of the entire society. Song IV,20 refers to this concern. Interpreted from this angle, the equation $1=2$ means a double strength for the clan, an enrichment and a blessing instead of a burden and misfortune. The twins themselves are this force not only when their

spirits work during the healing ritual, but also when they play the two roles at once, because they are two.

To refer once again to V. Turner, he emphasises the paradoxes of the twinship in terms of opposition between the physical as opposed to structure, and mystic opposed to empiric. That is, the physical double is in conflict with the structural single, and the mystical one, (the identicalness of the twins, as one personality) is opposed to the empirical two (two distinct children). The *Mpangu*, on the contrary, see the phenomenon of the twins in terms of quantity, that is, 2 is better than 1. They confirm this belief by a proverb such as "*Boodi mbúta; bukaka n'soongo*" (to be two is better than being alone which is an illness).

However, an embarrassment remains in the form of a latent fear that exists among many parents of twins. As we know, the birth of the twins introduces a set of prohibitions into the ordinary life of the parents, relatives and friends. They have the duty to follow the expected model of life for the sake of the twins. In various circumstances, songs are used to remind those it may concern about the expected attitude to be adopted. For example: songs IV,13 and IV,18 remind the hearers that the affection shown to the twins must be the same for each, they must not have favourites: "*Bóó baana ka bázóláá kítáántú ko!*" (these children do not accept divisions) while songs IV,5 and IV,7 give details of the manner in which they have to be treated: "*Kabila Nsíimba, kabila Nzuzi mu kyeese*" (make a gift to *Nsíimba*, make a gift to *Nzuzi*, joyfully). The parents, especially the mother of the twins, are given numerous counsels and warnings about their duties and the behaviour towards everyone in the society.

In critical circumstances such as an illness, embarrassment and anxiety reach their climax since the parents and relatives cannot be sure to what extent they have fulfilled or not all the details of their obligations. In many cases they feel guilty of some omission. Thus they are disturbed by fear from which they then look for liberation. The recourse to the ritual seems in some way an attempt to re-adjust the situation for their own sake. Behind the gladness which characterises the rituals for the twins, a hidden fear lurks and affects the relatives. This fear can be caused, in some way, by the material conditions of life in the society.

3. Material Aspect:

Expressions: “*bááná bóódi*” (two children) or “*bááboodi báyísa*” (they came two by two) as sung in songs IV,2 v.7; IV,8 vv.1-2; and II,19 vv.15,16, were repeated frequently during the ritual. They indicate only a joyful admiration for the event, that is, two children at once, but also hint at a lack of material means for keeping them healthy and comfortable. The same anxiety as that shown on the social level affects the parents and friends, regarding the means for feeding the baby twins as well as their mother. The songs *Kayaanga* IV,3 (be a benefactor/benefactress) and *Wayá, wayá* IV,8 (be generous) speak volumes. Relatives and friends are clearly urged to help the mother of the twins by bringing gifts to the children. In this way they ensure a sufficient supply of food for all the family. We have to remember that, in *Mpangu* society, women have the duty of providing daily food for the family. After giving birth to the twins, the mother stays at home for several months, says the song IV,8 v.11. She and her children must be taken care of by the community. Song IV,21 v.2 stresses this thought that they are fed by what is produced by other people.

Once again, custom guides individual behaviour in such a way that it is unacceptable to make the first visit to the baby twins without bringing some gift for them. The two levels, social and material merge together by the fact that, where there is a great number of members of the clan (in good relationship), there will be great material help for the twins and their mother.

Great poverty characterises the *Mpangu* society today. No one can afford to rear twins without help from relatives and friends. Moreover, alimentary taboos related to female fertility or to the twins themselves restrict the possibility of variation of food. The joyful expression of the songs which accompany the ritual does not deny the dreadful problems related to the material aspect of life in the society. Nevertheless, the existence of this fear does not lessen the joy expressed during the twins' rituals; it is part of them.

4.2.2. Specific Roles of the Twins and their Rituals in the Society

To maintain the contact between the two worlds – the visible, and the invisible – is one of the major concerns of the clan, in the *Mpangu* society. Rather, it could be said that this is the basic principle of life, since human life is conceived as being a progression in space and time from the other world, through this world, and back again (MacGaffey, 1986). The phenomenon of the twins is the illustration par excellence of this reality. Reflecting on their origin, we have learnt how closely linked they are with *bakúlu*. *Bansúmba* themselves are the bridge between the two worlds. They share life with inhabitants of the invisible world as well as with those in the visible world.

The healing rituals such as *Kubóonda* and others are means of manipulating relationships between this world and the other. The specific roles played by the twins are to be defined according to these relations. Considering the twins as “special” and “mysterious” children reinforces the belief in the existence of *bakúlu* and their intervention for the well being and welfare of the clan. People believe that having the twins in the family shortens the distance between the two worlds, for they constitute a bridge, as we have seen above. Moreover, they play their specific roles as *bakúlu* do for the benefit of the clan.

In the context of the healing ritual, *bansúmba* themselves are regarded as *mpoongo*, that is, the means, the agents for curing and healing. They have power to do it. This happened in the two healing rituals *kiziku* (at *Makáanga*) and *kubóonda* (at *Nseke*). The main aim in the two cases was to improve the condition of life. To do so, they needed a healing action in order to liberate them from ailments and misfortunes. They could obtain this only through an appropriate *mpoongo*, the means for healing. They invoked *bakúlu* to bring up this *mpoongo*, so that they could apply it, and obtain the healing. Songs IV,20 and IV,27 were sung in the two rituals. The first indicated what the participants needed, that is, the intervention of *bakúlu* in bringing the *mpoongo* needed. The second song told us a reason why they needed it (to improve life in the clan).

An interesting detail was that during the healing ritual *kubóónda*, from the beginning the twins themselves were regarded as the agents who had to secure the healing that the people were looking for. For that reason, the spirits of the twins were invoked through the song IV,9: *Nza lwiisa baana* (come children). Endowed with the special capacity of a double life, they could be healers and patients at the same time. The two sets of twins played these roles; the first were asked to heal their own mother, the second were expected to be healed by their own spirits.

Another role of the twins is related to the social life. It is a kind of exaltation of such major virtues as gladness, amiability, generosity, love and so forth. The *Mpangu* look at them as being important and a value to be held and preserved among the members of the society. The event of the twins offers an opportunity to praise and teach these virtues through the songs dedicated to them. Since the twins are there it is possible to urge people to practice such virtues.

In conclusion, let us say that in spite of a latent fear about the twins, for the reasons explained above, the event and advent of *bansúmba* are appreciated by the *Mpangu*. The positive aspect, that is, the gift and blessing from *bakúlu*, is more important than any reason for anxiety. The twins are believed to have the power to bring peace and harmony into the community they belong to. This is one of the special messages conveyed through the songs which accompanied the healing ritual *kubóónda*. In song IV,11, for example, the term *toombe* or *mpiimpa* (darkness) refers to behaviour and actions which can destroy peace in the family while it is clearly expressed in the song IV,13 that "these children do not accept division".

Consequently, where there are disputes and divisions, the ritual must be performed to improve the situation. Obviously, it could be said that, on various occasions, rituals are carried out primarily as a response to the needs for re-adjustment in disturbed situations, or for the re-establishment of broken relationships with inhabitants of the invisible world. These are the purposes of the ritual *Kubóónda*.

From this angle, the ritual *kubóónda*, as interpreted above, was a good occasion to achieve this goal. It was true that the knees of the young mother of the twins had become swollen. That the solution to this affliction was sought through the ritual *kubóónda* is evidence that those concerned thought its cause came from the other world. The relatives were certain that their relationships with the invisible world needed to be examined and rectified. On this occasion, *bansíimba* (the twins) were the agents for this re-adjustment.

NOTES

Chapter 4 : The Healing Ritual *Kubóonda*

¹ *Budyóongo*: See note 9 in the section of *Bankita*'s Rituals.

² In other words, this statement can be read as "we do not have recourse to the man-made and empowered objects, in order to discover the causes of afflictions, or to seek healing through them". *Budyóongo* used the term *n'kisi* taking into account its ambiguity: referring to both its positive and negative effects.

In *Buákasa*'s terms (1980), *n'kisi* are instruments used by *ngaanga* for healing or for protection. Those aimed at personal protection are employed by particular individuals; those dedicated for collective protection (a clan, for example) are administered by the chiefs of lineages. In this context, commented Van Wing, *n'kisi* itself is taken as an instrument of communication with *bisúmbi* (local spirits) who animate and empower it. It becomes then a magic instrument used by an expert, for protection or for destruction (Van Wing, 1959).

By her remark, *Budyóongo* tried to get rid of the confusion which characterises the concept of *n'kisi* among the *Mpangu*. She aimed at distinguishing the source of her power and that of the twins from the power and practice of the marginalised *n'kisi* caused by Christian attacks on it as evil during the long periods of colonisation and evangelisation. *Budyóongo*'s remark could also be affected by my presence, as a Catholic religious, at the site of the ritual. She tried to make sure that nothing was wrong in her behaviour and actions.

By using the term "charms" as synonymous with *n'kisi*, MacGaffey (1986) stressed the aspect of protection rather than the description of *n'kisi* power as a whole. My interpretation of the term "charms" refers to what the *Mpangu* call *nsilúkú zí nitu* (supports for protection of the body). These are objects worn on the body to keep away evil, or to bring good luck. Certainly, as instruments for protection, they also have power for attacking enemies but they do not heal illnesses. Nevertheless, they are not regarded as *n'kisi*. In the context of material prosperity, the *Mpangu* speak of "*mbaambu*" which brings success in all undertakings.

The distinction made by MacGaffey between "*n'kisi*" (portable objects) and "*n'kisi nsi*" (local spirits) does not apply to the *Mpangu* idea of *n'kisi*. For them, *n'kisi* are man-made objects acting under the power of a spirit (Van Wing, *ibid*). Bittremieux's (1936) interpretation of *n'kisi nsi* refers to what the *Mpangu* acknowledge as the power which influences all social and domestic life, that is, *lukóbi*.

To conclude this reflection on *n'kisi*, MacGaffey pointed out one of the sources of ambiguity, that is, the destruction of the political system by the introduction of colonially designated "chiefs" which corrupted the memory of what chieftainship had been. Therefore, the distinction between cults related to personal protection, and those serving the collective interest became obscure, and finally, disappeared at the turn of the century. Since the local cults associated with chieftainship disappeared, the meaning of *n'kisi* was modified under pressure of missionary inquiry and teaching. Missionaries noted mainly the negative aspect of *n'kisi*. That was one of the reasons why *n'kisi* were disapproved and destroyed by the missionaries and rulers of the country. In the present society today, this confusion remains. That is a reason why some informants preferred the term *mpoongo* to indicate sacred objects for healing, rather than the term *n'kisi*.

³ *Zimpúungu*: Plural form of *mpúungu* which indicates a powerful sort of *n'kisi*. According to Buakasa, *mpúungu* is the chief of all the *n'kisi* in *Kóongo* thought.

⁴ There was no "broken leg". This expression meant that the young mother of the twins was unable to use her leg; she was obliged to stay at home as if she had a broken leg.

⁵ *Matóóndo*: This term refers both to the "mushroom of love" and Thanksgiving. When referring to the "mushroom of love" the singular form *tóóndo* as well as the plural form *matóóndo* can be used, while to indicate Thanksgiving, only the plural form is used. The concept of thanksgiving, here, is rather "to

express feelings of love" than to give thanks. In this way, *tóóndo* (mushroom of love), *nsáám̃ba* (palm wine), and *luzibu* (a nut similar to the kola nut) constitute the prescribed symbolical objects for expression of love during the rituals connected to *bakúlu* (ancestors) and *bansíím̃ba* (the twins).

⁶ *Luzibu*: There is a play on the words: */kuzibula/* means to open [the door, the way], to allow something to happen easily, as expressed by *Budyóóngo* in section 3.2. before answering questions for an interview; she asked her ancestors: "*Lutuzibúlúla nzilá, ka lutukáángi nzilá ko*" (Be open to us, do not obstruct the way). The nut *luzibu* was offered in order to please the ancestors and the twins, so that they guaranteed the success of the ritual.

⁷ Death of *Nkita*: This verse refers to the initiation ritual of *Vweela* described in the previous chapter. At a given moment the candidates must go through an experience of *kufwá nkitá* (to die the death of *nkitá*), that is, to become a new person. To do so, the candidates are asked to lie down on the floor, with their eyes closed, and to stop breathing until the initiator takes them by the hand and raises them. After this "death" they receive a new name according to the specific function each is expected to have in the society.

⁸ *Ndúúndu*: (See chapter 2, note 12). Here the term refers to the twins because of their relationship with abnormal beings such as albinos or *ndúúndu*.

⁹ *Makúta*: The changes in the currency unit of Zaïrean money in the seventies. Ten *makúta* made one unit of Zaïrean money which at that time equalled one American dollar. Continual devaluation of money in the eighties stopped the use of *makúta*. Nowadays, "New Zaïre" (NZ) is the currency unit in use in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thirty four *makúta* mentioned in the ritual *Kubóónda* is a symbolical amount of money; it does not have commercial value.

¹⁰ *Kimbéém̃bi*: The name of a type of small bird. It has the ability of stopping in the air while it "dances" with its wings. People who *tuuntuka* (enter into a trance) during the ritual of *vweela* shake their bodies as *kimbéém̃bi* does with its wings. The song recalls this analogy. Here the "two" *bimbéém̃bi* refer to *bansíím̃ba*, the twins.

¹¹ *Makaanda tukwééleem̃bi* (we are trying to appease the clans): The frequent repetition of this statement in the song emphasises the ritual action on the clans. The *Mpangu* believe that those clans affected by illnesses and misfortunes are under the influence of a broken harmony with the invisible beings. Healing rituals serve therefore to drive out this influence. In a way, the ritual *Kubóónda* was performed according to this aim, to strengthen and improve health.

CHAPTER 5

E.C.U.S.E. or *DIBUUNDU DI MPEEVE YA N'LOONGO*

(The Church of the Holy Spirit)

“E.C.U.S.E.” is an abbreviation of a French name: “*Eglises Chrétiennes Union du Saint Esprit*” (Christian Churches United in the Holy Spirit) which refers to the religious community known as *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo* (the Church of the Holy Spirit). It is one among several branches of *Kimbanguism*¹, grouping a number of churches all calling themselves *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo* (or *Dibuundu di Mpeeve a N'loongo*).

The *E.C.U.S.E.* section I had the privilege of visiting is a parish of the same association, located at *Nkáándu* since 1968. My visits took place in May 1995, when I was welcomed by the Pastor *Ngwayila Ndongalasiya* who has been in charge of the parish since 1990. Before answering my questions, the Pastor stressed convincingly that health was the major concern of *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo*. He said:

“Health is the most important thing for us. One reason is that without good health no one can do any work, not even pray. Each believer can only go to church to pray, and by his/her work can earn enough to contribute to the church if he/she has good health. There are two kinds of health: physical and spiritual. These two aspects are very important since they allow a person, or not, to accomplish easily his/her duties as a Christian. That is the reason why in our church the health of the faithful comes first.”

He illustrated his interpretation of the importance of health recalling the example of Jesus:

“The mission of Jesus, when he came on earth, was to lead the people in such a way that they could have eternal life. But the health of the people was one of his major concerns. This explains why Jesus prayed for the

sick, he cast out evil spirits, healed the lepers and the paralytics, and fed those who were starving on the mountain. These examples help the members of the church to value health in their own lives, and to do their best to improve it all the time.

Bisyeelo are the leaders of the ritual of intercession for the sick. They are endowed with special gifts such as *kusaambila* (to intercede for others), *kunyaakisa* (to heal), and *kukula mpeeve zĩmbi* (exorcism). These persons are also regarded as agents of reconciliation since they help afflicted persons as they try to re-establish harmony in their lives. For this reason these agents are also called *baluwááwánu* (persons seeking to establish good relationships).

Before praying for the sick, *bisyeelo* seek to identify the kind of illness and its causes since there are illnesses which can be cured with tablets taken from the hospital, whereas for other kinds of illnesses a reconciliation with relatives is necessary. This happens in the case of anyone who dishonours his/her parents or some other important relative, in which case they must first seek reconciliation, must ask forgiveness of them, so that they may recover physical health after availing themselves of the other means. Other types of illness depend especially on prayer. That is, the patient is prayed for by members of the committee as many times as it is necessary. This is the case of patients possessed by evil spirits. In order to identify the illness, *bisyeelo* and other members of the committee pray to God, asking for knowledge to identify the illness, as well as the way to treat it."

5.1. Beginning of the Parish E.C.U.S.E. at Nkáándu

[Briefly, Pastor *Ngwayila* explained how the Parish *E.C.U.S.E.* started at *Nkaandu* in 1968, under *Mandyangu Nsyaala*, the first Pastor];

“This was the time when the Catholic Church, which was the first to be established, would not allow other churches to express their faith publicly here in *Nkáándu*. According to our belief we know that, a long time ago, before the advent of our father *Kimbángu*, the Holy Spirit had come on earth. Our forefathers used to pray, and the Holy Spirit came upon them; but they did not understand what was going on. What happened was that, hidden in the bush, they prayed and sang, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues. But they did not realise that it was due to the presence of the Spirit in their midst. *Mpeeve ya N’loongo* was not known yet as a Church; it was not accepted.

When the Holy Spirit came upon , Simon Kimbangu our father, he too was persecuted; he was jailed; he was sent far away where he died. But before his death he prophesied that ‘In the future, the Holy Spirit will no longer be arrested. He will come upon all the people’. This is what the Prophet Joel spoke about, as reported by Peter in the Acts of the Apostles:

‘This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. Yes, even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit on those days, and they will proclaim my message.’ (Acts 2:17-18).

The same Spirit came upon our forefathers while they prayed in secret. They were told by the Holy Spirit: ‘Do not be afraid. I, Almighty God, wish the Holy Spirit to be witnessed by the Black People. You, Black People, must go further in your life, so that the world may know that the Spirit who came, in the past, upon the White People, has come now upon the Black People in the same way as He did at Cornelius’ house, as reported in the Acts [of the Apostles], Chapter 10.

Having this in mind, our forefathers persevered in prayer. They received patients. After interceding, they placed their hands on them, and the patients were healed. Many people joined the group since they were attracted by the good news of healing. From then on they looked for a place where they could gather for prayer and healing.

Although their teaching was not authoritative, the Catholic Church no longer stopped them. They could practice publicly for the sake of healing. This is the way the present site of *Nkáándu* was bought, and the church was built.

Our evangelisation is based on prayer and especially the prayer of intercession. People who come to us go back and witness to what they have seen, what they have received. Then others come. Slowly, we organised ourselves, as we shall see.”

5.2. Timetable of the Parish E.C.U.S.E./ Nkáándu

[Sunday is a special day for thanksgiving. The Sunday Worship is divided into three parts: *Mpedozo* (ritual for the purification of the leaders); *Matóóndo* (thanksgiving), and *Lunyáákúsu* (intercession for the patients).

The first part starts at 10.00 a.m. followed by the second without any interruption, to end at 11.30 or 12.00 in the church. After a short break outside, everyone re-enters the church for *Lunyáákúsu* which consists of the prayers of intercession for the patients. It begins at 1.00 p.m.

Commenting on this part of Sunday Worship, the Pastor referred to a question the people were asked by Jesus: “What does our Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To help or to harm? To save a man’s life or to destroy it?” (Mk.3:4). The answer was given by Jesus himself as he healed the paralysed hand. Then using a parable, Jesus taught them that it is better to save than to lose: “To implement this teaching, prayers for the sick are provided after *Matóóndo* (thanksgiving)”.

“On Wednesday, a session commonly called *min’sámu* (messages of revelation) takes place in the afternoon (13.00-15.00), that is, for the committee to consult God about sickness and other afflictions of the patients. This consultation aims at discovering the way to treat them, if this is required. During the night, there is a session of prayers for deliverance from evil spirits, and for those whose illness has lasted for a long time.

On Friday afternoon (15.00), there is a short prayer for thanksgiving and for the sick. It is then, after the consultation on Wednesday, that some patients are told they need the committee to pray especially for them during three or nine consecutive days. At midnight, a second session of prayer for deliverance is arranged for these people. An appropriate teaching is provided for people who come seeking healing in the evening or during the night. Communion of mind and heart between the patient and the group which prays for him/her is an important condition for healing. The patient needs to know that he/she must trust in God, in Jesus Christ, that it is the Spirit of God who accomplishes the healing. Without teaching, a patient cannot reach the spiritual level of the praying group; and a friction may occur. This brief teaching helps to open one's heart to Jesus as the healer. Through the teaching the patient also learns that other persons, in the past, were also in the same condition of possession. They were completely liberated from the evil influence because they trusted in God's power. Finally, through such a teaching the patients do learn what to do and how to do it."

[Throughout the ritual the spiritual interests of the participants are taken into account as we will see in the account of the Sunday Worship described next].

5.3. Sunday Worship

[The Sunday Worship starts by a short ritual of purification: *mpedozo*. According to the concept of ministry in *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo* it is unacceptable that a leader should fulfil his/her religious duties without being purified beforehand].

5.3.1. *Mpedozo*

[The main objective of this ritual is to ask for purification from one's weaknesses and sins in order to be ready to lead others in prayer and to praise the Lord God. It is expected also that through prayer during the ritual, one may receive a special inspiration from the Spirit. The ritual itself consists of three songs and free prayer].

A group of about 12 persons (men and women) gathered in a room called *Nzó yí Mávaanga* (lit: the house for realisations). After a short moment of silence, the Pastor introduced the ritual in dialogue with his assembly. He said:

Pastor: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Pastor: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Pastor: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Pastor: We thank our God

Assembly: [Clapping hands 9 times as follows: 3-3-3]²

[Then the Pastor introduced the first song]:

Song V,1: *Tuvwaata Mpeeve*

(Let us clothe ourselves with the Spirit)

Solo: 1 Let us clothe ourselves with the Spirit for this battle
We are ...

Chorus: You are soldiers of Jesus Christ
By this Spirit everything is purified
Do not be afraid

2 Let us clothe ...

Chorus: Let us clothe ourselves with the Spirit for the
battle

3 Let us join ...

Chorus: Let us join Lord Jesus, the Saviour
The Valiant Warrior
Give your hearts to him
Do not be afraid

4 Let us be ...

Chorus: Let us be like a wise man

Who built his house on the rock

5 O! The rain *yááya*

Chorus: The strong rain will come

But it [house] will not collapse

6. Let us join ...

Chorus: Let us join the works of Jesus, the Saviour

He is the Valiant Warrior

Give your hearts to him

Do not be afraid

[Without interruption, the Pastor introduced the second song]

Song V,2: *O Mamééme!* (O the sheep)!

Solo: 1 O the sheep ...

Chorus: The sheep you have left are weeping

Because of the suffering in this world

2 Come, O Spirit ...

Chorus: Come, O Spirit. Please, come O Spirit

What a pity!

Come, O Spirit of the Saviour

3 O the Pastors ...

Chorus: The Pastors you have left are complaining

What a pity!

Because of the suffering in this world

4 O these people ...

Chorus: These people are complaining

What a pity!

Because of the suffering from this world

5 O come, Father ...

Chorus: Come, Father. Please come, Father

What a pity!

Come father to save the world

6 O *Yáá Goonda* ...³

Chorus: *Yáá Goonda* whom you have left is complaining
Of the suffering in this world

7 O *Yáá Goonda* ...

Chorus: *Yáá Goonda* whom you have left is weeping
Because of the suffering. Please!

8 Come, Spirit ...

Chorus: Come, Spirit, O come, Spirit
What a pity!
Come, Spirit to save the world

9 Come, Spirit ...

Chorus: Come, Spirit, come please, come Spirit
To save the world

10 This Spirit ...

Chorus: This Holy Spirit is neglected
Because of the suffering in this world

11 Please, O Spirit ...

Chorus: This Holy Spirit is being laughed at
Because of the suffering in the world, O please!

12 Come, Father ...

Chorus: Come, Father. We feel sorrow. Come, Father
Father, Father, come to save the world.

Song V,3: *E beeto nkéénda* (We feel sorrow)

Solo: 1 We feel sorrow ...

Chorus: We feel great sorrow, [we], Black People
because [our] prophets were sent far away

2 Sorrow, sorrow ...

Chorus: We feel great sorrow, [we], Black People
Because [our] prophets were sent far away

- 3 They have gone ...
 Chorus: They have gone far away
 What a pity! Many prophets were sent far away
- 4 They have gone ...
 Chorus: They have gone far away
 What a pity! Many prophets died far away
- 5 They came back ...
 Chorus: They came back to the valleys of Judea
 Only few number came back
- 6 O father *Kimbángu*, father, listen
 What a pity!
 Chorus: O father *Kimbángu*, father, listen
 O father, listen to [your] children's voices
- 7 Father *Kimbángu*, father, what a pity!
 Chorus: O father, listen to [your] children's voices
 The world is full of the tears of the Black People
 Wipe away [their] tears
 Stand up, speak before this world
- 8 O father *Kimbángu*, you are prophet
 Chorus: Father *Kimbángu*, you are prophet, prophet
 Listen to [your] children's voices
- 9 Father *Kimbángu*,
 Chorus: Prophet, prophet, listen to [your] children's voices
 The world is full of the tears of the Black
 Wipe away [their] tears
 Stand up, speak before this world
- 10 What a pity for the Black People!
 Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
 Stand up, speak before this world
- 11 The weeping of the Black People
 Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
 Stand up, speak before this world

- 12 Look at, see the suffering
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 13 *Yáá Goonda* is dressed with sackcloth
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 14 *Yáá Goonda* is covered with ashes
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 15 Please, O prophet, O Black prophet
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 16 O father *Kimbángu*, you are prophet
Chorus: Father *Kimbángu*, father. What a pity!
O prophet, listen to [your] children's voices
What a pity!
O prophet, listen to [your] children's voices
The world is full of the tears of the Black People
Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 17 Weeping of the Black People ...
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 18 O friends ...
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- 19 Look at, see the suffering
Chorus: Wipe away [their] tears
Stand up, speak before this world
- Pastor: Let us pray

[Freely, each participant prayed out loud to God. After a couple of minutes, the Pastor concluded saying]:

Pastor: *Móóyo!*⁴

Assembly: *E móóyo, e móóyo wúná yééto*

Pastor: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Pastor: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Pastor: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Pastor: Thank you. If someone has received any inspiration during the prayer, you may share it.

[There was no inspiration, that is, no one received^{any}/special message from the Holy Spirit in order to share it with others. Then it was time for the second part of the Sunday Worship. The bells rang for the second time to gather all who were waiting in the courtyard. Ranged in two lines, they were ready for the solemn entrance into the church].

5.3.2. *Matóóndo* (Thanksgiving)

This part of Sunday Worship deals especially with expressing thanks to God for his blessings and protection received during the week, of which Sunday is the seventh and last day. *Matóóndo* is composed of: *N'kúúngá mí lúsiku* (songs of praise); *Lusáámbu* (prayers): these are formally conducted by chosen persons on behalf of the community; *Ngimbulu* (performance of songs by several choirs); *Ntaambula banzéénza* (welcoming visitors); *Lusáámbú lú N'vúúngi* (prayer by the Pastor); *N'sámú mí Díbuundu* (Church news).

[A leader chosen in advance by the Pastor introduced this section, when everyone was settled in the church]:

Leader: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Leader: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Leader: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Leader: We give thanks for our entrance, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks:

Assembly: [Clapping 9 times as follows: 3-3-3]

Leader: Let us recollect ourselves for two minutes in order to entrust all our concerns to God, our Father, the Almighty.

[After a short period of silence, he continued]:

Leader: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Leader: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Leader: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

A. *N'kúúngá mí lúsíku*(Songs of praise)

Song V,4: *Zimpasi ziingi vava nza*

(Too much suffering in this world)

Solo: 1 Too much suffering, O sufferings

Chorus: Much suffering here in this world

We have to bear

2 Temptations ...

Chorus: Temptations cause the loss of human beings

Come, O Spirit, to help us

3 O Spirit ...

Chorus: O Spirit, please come, please come
Come to help us

4 Many struggles ...

Chorus: Many struggles here in this world
We have to endure

5 Let us persevere ...

Chorus: Let us persevere in prayer
And asking for the means to struggle

6 O Spirit ...

Chorus: O Spirit, please come

Song V,5: *Toonda N'tinu a Dizulu*

(Love the Heavenly King)

[With few modifications, this song was sung during the Twins' Rituals (Song IV,4). In addition]:

1 May our fathers
May the joyful spirits
May the People of God in this world
Praise [Him] endlessly

Chorus: Love, love, love Jesus
Love God, O my soul
If you do not do it
Who else can fully praise
[God] the Father?

2 Let us remember our fathers
And follow Jesus
If you do not do it
Who else can fully praise [God] the Father?

(Chorus)

B. *Lusaámbu*

[Three prayers conducted each by a person appointed by the leader: two women and a man]:

Song V,6: *Lusaamba Nzaambi* (Pray to God)

[by Mother Kyóóni: Catechist]

Solo: 1 Pray to God who has liberated you from slavery

Chorus: Pray to God who has liberated you from slavery

2 Father *Góónda* spoke to the saints

Chorus: Pray to God who has liberated you from slavery

3 May you come back ...

Chorus: May you come back to pray to the true God

Come back to pray to the true God

To whom your fathers used to pray

He is the One who liberated you from slavery

O God, you hold the secret of the world

4 Father *Góónda* has spoken to all the churches

Chorus: Pray to God who has liberated you from slavery

5 Father *Góónda* had proclaimed to the churches

Chorus: Pray to God who has liberated you from slavery

6 May you come back ...

Chorus: Come back to pray to the true God

Come back to pray to the true God

To whom your fathers used to pray

He is the One who liberated you from slavery

O God, you hold the secret of the world

Mother *Kyóóni*: Let us pray:

“We thank you indeed, Father, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and all things under the sky. Father, you have fashioned human beings in your likeness. You put them in the world. Father, here we are, those you have called from clan *ṭō* clan,

lineage by lineage. You have gathered us to give you thanks, Heavenly God. We are yours, Father, you let us enter into your holiness. Come upon us, so that we become holy.

We thank you for your protection during 6 days, today is the 7th. Father, we are not here to sell and buy, nor to eat and drink, but to give you thanks. Father, listen to the cry of everyone, listen to the supplications of everyone as we talk to you about our suffering and our concerns.

First, forgive us our sins committed all this week. We carry them like weights; we are soaked in them as in water. God, we come to you kneeling, prostrating ourselves. God of pity, forgive us as you did our predecessors. Give your Spirit to each member [of the assembly] and to each leader; may they be guided in your name. Those who have to teach, give them your words. The lips are theirs, come down upon them, so that they may utter joyful words and blessings. We are here like people with empty plates, nothing on them for the nourishment of our spiritual life. Father, we came seeking spiritual food. May it remind us of eternal life.

God Almighty, we ask you that the Church of *Mpeeve ya N'loongo* may become strong and firm in this city. With the Spirit we will triumph [in the battle]. The Spirit enables us to conduct your work, O God Almighty. We ask you for the Spirit of the truth to come upon us in this city of the Lord; we ask you that the Spirit of love may grow in this city. We do not ask for material things, we ask for your will, we are yours, O God Almighty.

May our entrance [into the church] and our coming out be in your hands. Wrap us one by one with your holy power.

We would like to ask you for our needs, but you, God Almighty, know the needs of everyone within our hearts. It is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit that we ask always for what we need. *Móoyo ...*"

Assembly: *E móoyo, e móoyo wúná yéeto.*

[Mother *Kyóóni* returned to her seat. *Evarist Mayáamba* (deacon) replaced her in the front of the assembly. He sang]:

Song V,7: *Va kikéle* (In the past ...)

Solo: 1 In the past ...

Chorus: In the past we were nothing

But since *Kimbángu* answered God's call

He called us to come out ^{of} the darkness
Now God gave us the Spirit

2 Put ...

Chorus: Put your thoughts in the Lord
Be Pastors of God's clan
So that when the Supreme Pastor appears
You may be invited to celebrate

3 Make ...

Chorus: Make good use of [the words] you have
already heard
You heard that fearful things will come
You know that fearsome people are
numerous
For this is the final time

4 Put ...

Chorus: Put your thoughts in the Lord
Be Pastors of God's clan
So that when the Supreme Pastor appears
You may be invited to celebrate

Evarist: Let us pray:

"O Yahweh, God of our father, Creator of heaven and earth, and giver of life to all things. You are God to whom our fathers prayed. You are God to whom our grandparents prayed. You are the same God to whom [our] father *Simon Kimbángu*, the prophet of Black People, prayed. According to his oath, [our] father *Góonda* was chosen; he is the liberator of Black People.

God Almighty, we give you thousands of thanks; we are your creatures under heaven. During the night we were like the dead. During all the week, O God, you have looked after us. Today is the day for prayer, for rest, for remembering to seek and praise your name, to worship and to thank you. May your Spirit guide us, and enlighten us, so that we can surely praise your name.

Yahweh, here we are in three groups: the first, those whose spirit has returned to you. Give them eternal rest in the bosom of founders of clans and languages. The second, those who are sick in their houses. We implore you Yahweh, on their behalf, heal them by your Spirit. A Doctor will heal them physically; you Yahweh, put your hand on

them in blessing. Remember also those who are in prison through their own fault, and those who are innocent. Have mercy on them.

We are the third group, we who come here to thank you. Look at the great and small Churches; all are concerned with praising your name. It is great to honour and worship you, O God, King of Sabbath. During all the week you took care of us. Everything is guided by your merciful goodness. You fulfil your promise to the world. But the world does not understand. *Mpeeve ya N'loongo* is not welcomed in the world because no one knows where He comes from. On the other hand, we believe that He came from you, our Father in the heaven. You did so to accomplish your promise to Black People. May your promise become a reality for us. You came to us to give us eternal life. Yes, this eternal life expected by Jesus Christ to be sent to this world, in order to receive your strength and power.

God our Father, we call you, please guide us during our life. We offer you our city; may we build it in love. Bless us and guide us in your mercy. Look at our forefathers; they trusted in you; listen to them. Yahweh, our Father, you heard the first prayer to which we add ours; guide the next one. May your name be worshipped always. In the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. *Móoyo ...*"

Assembly: *E móoyo, e móoyo wúná yééto*

[It was Mother *Mandyaangu*'s turn to lead the assembly in prayer. She started with a song]:

Song V,8: *É Mfímú Yízu* (O Lord Jesus)

Solo: 1 O Lord Jesus

Chorus : Lord Jesus is the lighted lamp

Which has no end

2 O, how we thank you ...

Chorus: How many thanks to God [our] Father

3 O, Holy Spirit ...

Chorus: The Holy Spirit is the lighted lamp

Which has no end

4 O Elias, the prophet ...

Chorus: The prophet Elias is the lighted lamp

Which has no end

5 O father *Kimbangu* ...

Chorus: Father *Kimbángu* is the lighted lamp
Which has no end

6 O father *Góónda* ...

Chorus: Father *Góónda* is the lighted lamp
Which has no end

Mandyaangu: "Let us pray with the Psalm 100 of David:

All the nations!
Assembly: Make haste to acclaim the Lord
Let us serve the Lord gladly
Come into his presence with joyful cries
Know that He, the Lord is God

He created us; we did not create ourselves
Let us be his people and his sheep in his clan
Walk through his porticos giving thanks
Enter his courts praising him
Give thanks to him, bless his name
Yes, the Lord is good
His mercy is everlasting
His faithfulness appears in various ways.
Móóyo, e móóyo, e móóyo wúná yéeto".

Leader: We give thanks

Assembly: (Clapping: 3-3-3)

Song V,9: *Azali koyá* (He is coming)

[This song was introduced by the choir by way of conclusion to the stage of *lusáámbu* (prayers). The song was sung in both languages, *Lingála* and *Kikóongo*].

Chorus 1: He is coming the Son of God
He is coming, He is on his way

Solo: 1 The Son of God has not arrived yet
You are already tired
He is coming, He is on his way (Chorus 1)

2 O, mothers, pray

To the Son of God

Chorus 2:[Dressed in] white clothes

Palm branches in their hands

3 O the white clothes

Palm branches in their hands

(Chorus 2)

Leader: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Leader: We give thanks for this song for support, in the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks.

Assembly: [Clapping: 3-3-3]

C. *Ngimbulu* (Performance of Songs)

Leader: It is time now for the song performance by the choirs present here. We ask
the boys' choir "Tournesol" (Sunflower) to sing for us some songs inspired
by God. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Leader: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

[Several songs were sung by each of two choirs. Spirituality is not the only theme of
these songs. Some referred to the socio-political context in which the Church of
Mpeeve ya N'loongo began. Song V,10 described the relationships between White and
Black People at that time, and God's intervention].

Song V,10: *Mindélé ya Nzáámbi ná ya Luyáálu*

(White Missionaries and Rulers [of the country])

[This song was sung by all the congregation as a story]:

When the White missionaries and the rulers came to our country
They realised that our forefathers already worshipped
Nzáámbí Mpuungu (God Almighty)
They called him: *Dééso*
He is a powerful God
He worked miracles.
But the White People forbade our grandparents to pray to their God
They frightened them.
But now
The Spirit has come down on this earth upon father *Simon Kimbángu*.
He helped us to get our independence
By the power of the Holy Spirit
Unfortunately, we ignored this Spirit
But when there is too much suffering on this earth
Then we pray to ask the Spirit:
'Come and help us since we cannot do anything by ourselves
Even with the help of foreign residents'.
Only the Spirit can help us in the numerous circumstances of our life:
During the period of lootings
During the National Conference
When the authorities try to establish a National Budget
And when they seek to provide the country with weapons
God's power appeared in *Simon Kimbángu* and our father *Góónnda*.
Unfortunately, we neglected them
That is why we ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to create in us a new heart
Foreign residents can help us
But only the Spirit can change our hearts.
Anyone who ignores the Spirit cannot find refuge

Song V,11: *E nsí yo* (This Country)

- Solo: 1 This country, our country
Chorus: Is the paradise of God the Father
- 2 God has already chosen it
Chorus: Since the beginning of the world
- 3 This country, our country
Chorus: Is the paradise of God the Father
- 4 God has already chosen it
Chorus: Since the beginning of the world
He has revealed himself as human
To the Black People
According to his revelations
- 5 A long time ago, He has chosen you
In *Kóóngó dyá Ntóótíla*
Chorus: The Foundress was *Kimpá-kí-Víta*
The prophet of God prophesied as follows:
'God will reveal [himself] to the Black People'
He will be called by an amazing name
The White People were jealous
Because God could think about the Black People
They jailed the prophet of God
In the prison at *Madimba*
[You know] our *Koongo* is divided in
three *Kóongo*:
- 6 The *Kóongo* of the beginning:
Chorus: *Kóongo-Angola*
- 7 The middle *Kóongo*:
Chorus: *Kóongo-Kinshasa*
- 8 The last *Kóongo*
Chorus: *Kóongo-Brazza*
- 9 The First *Kóongo*:

Chorus: *Kóongo-Angola*

10 The Second *Kóongo*

Chorus: *Kóongo-Kinshasa*

11 The Third *Kóongo*:

Chorus: *Kóongo-Brazza*

It is in the middle *Kóongo*⁵ where leadership and priesthood appeared.

This happened when the country was ruled by *mindéle* (white people)

Our forefathers were harassed as slaves

God called the prophet *Kimbángu*

To speak before the Black People

The White People again were jealous

They jailed *Kimbángu* again

In the prison *Kimbángu* said:

‘Do not be afflicted

From *Madimba* will come a redeemer’

To his fellow prisoners [he said]:

‘When you go back to your country *Kóongo*

You will see a little child’

12 Who is this one?

Chorus: He is [our] father *Góónnda*

13 His reputation ...

Chorus: His reputation spread

But the people did not understand

14 Could you remember:

There was a log-drum at *Kipáko*

Chorus: This log-drum played a [special] strophe⁶

(= conveyed a special message)

15 Log drum ...

Chorus: This log drum played a [special] strophe

16 *Yááya*, the meaning of the strophe was, *yááya*:

Chorus: 'Jesus enters *Kipáko* land'

17 Who is this one?

Chorus: He is [our] father *Góónda*

18 His hope ...

Chorus: His hope spread

But the people did not understand

19 Who is this one?

Chorus: He is [our] father *Góónda*

20 His reputation ...

Chorus: His reputation spread

But the people did not understand

Leader: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Leader: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Leader: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Leader: We give thanks for these songs. In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks:

Assembly: [Clapping: 3-3-3]

[The second choir, composed of young girls, followed]

Song V,12: *Luyangalalá* (Rejoice)

Solo: 1 Rejoice, rejoice

When the Son of God raises his hands

[Followed by] his assistants, rejoice o o! Chorus: [Repeated 1]

2 O mothers, rejoice, rejoice

Mothers rejoice, children, rejoice

When father *Goonda* raises his hands

[Followed by] his assistants, rejoice, o o! (Chorus)

3 O mothers, rejoice, rejoice
Fathers, rejoice, rejoice
When the Son of God raises his hands
[Followed by] his servants, rejoice o o! (Chorus)

[Without any transition, the young girl singing the 'solo' went on from one song to another].

Song V,13: *Kótele mu nkeembo*

(He/she enters into glory)

Solo: O listen, listen, listen, listen, listen
What a marvel!
He/she enters into glory, o mother! Chorus: [Repeated]
[The same verses were repeated several times]

Song V,14: *Lubongá biseesa* (Get [your] brooms)

Solo: Get [your] brooms to sweep your hearts
The Son of God is coming to us Chorus: [Repeated]

Leader: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Leader: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Leader: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

Leader: We give thanks for these songs, in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks:

Assembly: [Clapping 3-3-3)

D. *Ntaambula banzéénza* (Welcoming Visitors)

Leader: This is the point when we welcome our visitors. We have received no written announcement from visitors. Those [in the assembly] who are here for the first time, please stand up, so that we may welcome them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[Informal visitors and new members stood up; they were greeted by the congregation (clapping). Everyone was asked to pray freely for them. Some prayed out loud while others sang].

E. *Lusáámbú lú N'vúúngi* (Pastor's Prayer)

Pastor:

"O Yahweh, Almighty God of our fathers. We give you thousands of thanks. We come to seek your Good News which builds your Church and confirms your works.

Father, look at the sadness and suffering of the Black People. For years there has been no understanding in our country, no protector. Our own country seems like a foreign land: we must buy the water and the wood we need. Our children are sold.

Almighty God, listen to the cry of our forefathers in the past. Since that time until now we ^{have been} suffering. O God, look on the Black People; there is no rest for them. Day and night we cry to you and ask: "Father, when will you answer us? When will you pay attention to us? And when will you give us rest and a blessing?

You have sent us father *Góónnda*, the redeemer of the Black People. He is dressed in sackcloth, covered with ashes like water; he renounced everything in this world. He cries and complains on behalf of the Black People in *Bakóongo's* land. O God, when will you answer us?

Our cheeks are covered with tears; no one can wipe them away; nobody can help us; nobody can protect us, nobody can sustain us. When we gather in your name for your glory, we remember also our sad situation. Listen to our cry and supplications. Yahweh God, do not forget us.

Confirm us in your Good News for which you sent us father *Kimbángu*, the prophet. He and our fathers and grandparents were arrested, sent far away, and dispersed. God, our Father, you are the true God; you see and hear. You, "Alpha" and "Omega". What are you waiting for? Why don't you listen to us and improve our life? We are waiting for your response according to your merciful compassion, and the will of Holy

Trinity: the Father, Jesus, your Son, and the Spirit you send us always as our helper.
Móóyo ...

Assembly: *E móóyo, e móóyo wúná yéeto!*

Pastor: Peace on earth!

Assembly: Peace in heaven!

Pastor: Peace in heaven!

Assembly: Peace on earth!

Pastor: Peace!

Assembly: Peace!

F. *N'sámú mí Díbuundu* (Church News)

Pastor: We have reached now the stage of listening to the news of the Church.

[Leaders of groups reported how their groups were working; they^{also} offered financial contribution to the Church].

From the beginning of the ritual, a young woman had stayed sitting in the courtyard, outside the church, praying and singing out loud. She entered the church, sat down on the floor, and asked the choir to sing for her *Toonda N'tinu a Dizúlu* (Love the Heavenly King) [Song V,5). After the singing she was expected to share any message she had received. She answered that she had nothing special to tell; but invited everyone to try to understand the way she behaved that morning. Saying this, she left the church.

The Pastor interpreted the fact as one of the characteristics of *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo* (Church of the Holy Spirit). By various ways the Spirit guides its members. Freely, God speaks to anyone for the benefit of the community. The specific role played by the young woman on that morning was to warn the people to enter the parish site through the main gate. [They used to enter through the fence and had destroyed it]. The meaning is that everything done for the glory of God must be done in order since disorder does not honour God.

Here ended this part of the Sunday Worship. The song *Kótele mu nkeembo* (He/she enters into glory) [Song V,13] was sung as a recessional song. The people went into the courtyard to await the third and last part: *Lunyáákúsu* (healing)].

5.3.3. *Lunyáákúsu* (Healing)

[At about 1.00 in the afternoon, believers re-entered the church. The Pastor introduced the ritual and, accompanied by the assembly, he sang the song *Toonda Yéézu* (Love Jesus), (Song V,5), followed by this prayer]:

Pastor: "I stand up firmly"

Assembly: "Like the cross stands firmly
To welcome the winner, God's winner
Not the winner of this world
The world cannot condemn me
Because I am God's winner
I give thanks to God
Who granted us spiritual life"

Pastor: *Móóyo ...*

Assembly: *E móóyo, e móóyo wúná yééto*

Song V,15: *Bu ngwíídi kidilu* (I heard your cry)

Solo: 1 I heard your cry

As you cry in this world

Chorus: Father *Góónda*, your tears

I will wipe them away

2 Enemies of this world surrounded me

Chorus: In you, Yahweh's power will be manifested

3 O heaven ...

Chorus: The heaven, I gave it to you

The earth, I gave it to you

May the heavenly spirits

And also human beings on this earth

Sing glory to you

4 If heaven and human beings do not speak

Chorus: The earth will speak

And give evidence in your favour

5 For you are alone among human beings, O father

Chorus: You are honoured today

In heaven and on earth

6 O heaven, ...

Chorus: The heaven, I gave it to you

The earth, I gave it to you

May the heavenly spirits

And also human beings on this earth

Sing glory to you

7 Look at the heaven

Chorus: The heaven is singing

The earth answers: glory

O glory!

And the spirits sing: glory

What a joy!

Glory, glory, alleluia!

Pastor: We give thanks

Assembly: [Clapping and beating drums 3-3-3]

Pastor: Let us give thanks again

Assembly: [Clapping and beating drums 3-3-3]

Pastor: Let us give thanks

Assembly: [Clapping and beating drums 3-3-3]

Pastor: Let us conclude

Assembly: [Clapping and beating drums 3-3-3]

Song V,16: *Tutoondele* (We give thanks)

Solo: 1 We give thanks

Chorus: We thank you Father of heaven and earth
You loved us

2 You sent down ...

Chorus: You sent down the Holy Spirit in Zaïre
You love us

3 We give thanks ...

Chorus: We thank you Father of heaven and earth
You loved us

4 You brought out ...

Chorus: You brought the People of Israel out of Egypt

Pastor: As we have said at the beginning, we acknowledge the importance of health in our life. This is why after giving thanks to the Lord, according to our Sunday Worship, we pray for those who are sick. We are lucky to come to church and receive the word of God. Those who are sick cannot do that. Therefore, at this stage of ritual we invoke God to give them health. [The choir introduced the following song]:

Song V,17: *Dó Mpeeve* (Please, O Spirit)

[While the choir sang, the members of the assembly prayed freely out loud].

Chorus: Please, come O Spirit, come
Come to help us .

Solo: 1 We shed too many tears

Come to help us (Chorus)

2 Please, O please, come, O Spirit, Please, come

Come to help us (Chorus)

3 O all of you ...

Chorus: All of you Black People

Continue to pray

4 We persevere ...

Chorus: We persevere in prayer

Until the last day

5 O please, O Spirit ...

Chorus: Come, please, come

O come to help us

6 When the temptations ...

Chorus: Are numerous

O come to help us

Song V,18: *A bu túlátáma na lóómba*

(If we keep asking ...)

Solo: 1 If we keep asking, we will receive
Spirit ...

Chorus: O Spirit, come

2 If we ask truly, we will receive
Spirit ...

Chorus: O Spirit, come

3 O Holy Spirit, come near us

Chorus: O Spirit come, O Yahweh

O Spirit come into this world

All the peoples are expecting you

O Spirit, come

[Songs and invocations went together. Some members of the assembly mixed French, *Lingala*, and *Kikoongo* language terms in their petitions. These were often not understandable. Freely, the sick went to the front of the church, knelt before one of about 12 *bisyeelo* (leaders and healers). Briefly, the sick explained their pain to one *kisyeelo* (singular of *bisyeelo*). The latter laid his/her hands on the head of the sick, prayed for them and gave them water to drink. Some water was poured out on the

head, and other afflicted parts of the body. In their prayer, *bisyeelo* addressed *Tááta Nzáámbi* (God the Father), *tááta* (father) *Góónnda*. Many children went to receive water to drink, and to be washed in; they said nothing to the *bisyeelo*].

5.3.4. *N'sámu* (Revelations)

Besides the power of healing, some of the *bisyeelo* have the gift of revelation; thus they are called *n'bikúdi* (revealers). Patients asked them questions about the source of their pain, and about the way in which they could improve their health. A sample of cases will give us an idea about the types of revelation people received. The way this part of ritual was practised shows how the people interpreted the Spirit's action. After the prayer of intercession for the sick, only *n'bikúdi* continued welcoming patients, the others returned to their places in the assembly. The young woman inhabited by the Spirit that morning was the main *n'bikúdi* of the day. She acted as a medium.

1st Case: *N'fú* (spirit of a dead person)⁷.

A young girl of about 16 years ^{of age} ~~old~~ was introduced by her mother to the medium, in order to know why her daughter was so often ill:

Mother: I would like to know why my daughter is so often ill.

Medium: Your daughter has been given in marriage *ku mása* (in the water, the world of the dead), by her *batááta* (the members of the father's lineage). They did so, because they are jealous of you.

Mother: That is true, Father⁸. [She approved by clapping].

Medium: That is why she is always ill.

Mother: That is right, God. [She clapped in approval for each revelation made by the medium].

Medium: Even her own father agreed with the members of his lineage. As you know, I do not have recourse to any *n'kísi*, I do not have *mpúúngu*. There is only the Spirit, the one received by our fathers. You must introduce this girl to God, our Father; he will save her from the influence of the dead *kuna mása* (in the world of the dead). Do you understand?

Mother: That is correct, father.

Medium: She is also to be blamed for her behaviour: she forgets what is spiritual, and prefers what is fleshly. It happens sometimes that you do not understand her. Do not look elsewhere for the solution to this problem, ask no one else but her fathers⁹. Look, this is the way she suffers: she feels pain in her stomach. This is caused by her dead husband who tries to have sexual intercourse with her. He fails, then he beats her during the night. Therefore, she feels pain everywhere in the stomach and in the back. You have to ask firmly her *batááta* (fathers) in order to recover her good state of health. That is all.

Pastor: The father is *nzáámbi* (lit: a god; supreme authority over his children). How can the clan tell him what to do for his daughter?

Medium: This is not the first time they seek to understand this problem. Everywhere they have been, the father and his kinsmen were accused. The thing is that he must meet the Spirit. Unfortunately, the father refuses that because he feels guilty. The clan has the right to force him to take this girl with him until she gets better. He will be reminded that it is important to have a healthy daughter, so that she might help both sides of her family.

[Looking at the mother and her relatives, she said]:

“You must pray very much, otherwise the father might cause trouble”.

[She patted the stomach of the sick girl, poured out water on it, and massaged it while she pronounced incomprehensible words such as]:

“Eso permeable clair tu senser

Esto sis ifo risposis

Iresto permeable clair, irresponseriable”

Pastor [approved]:

“This is a case of marriage in darkness”.

2nd Case: *Fúna* (Bad Luck)

[The second case concerned a woman who was seeking the well-being and welfare of her children. She introduced one of her daughters; she was sick and had bad luck. As an answer to the situation described by the woman, the medium sang: *Nkééndá tùmónáánga* (We feel sorrow); (Song V,3). She went on using proverbs]:

Medium: *“Dyóókó dísiisa ban’kwá weela,*

Koonso muuntu, bongá, dyá kwáku”.

(A cassava carrot which is left behind by hunters,

Anyone is free to get and eat it)¹⁰.

“Kyuulá ká mbísí kúdyá ko, mpasi n’sóki tun’kóta”.

(A toad is not meat to be eaten, we wish only to do harm)¹¹

Mother: What a miserable creature I am!

Medium: The father is dead. When he was alive he was very strong protecting his children. That is one reason why he died soon.

Mother: That is true.

Medium: Since their father’s death, these children are totally bereft of protection; anyone [of *bandoki*] can do what he/she wishes to do with them. The result is that they suffer from various illnesses.

Mother: That is really true, God.

Medium: Some [*ndoki*] speak to them in dreams. Finally, peace and joy disappeared from their lives. We can give you some information about all of this; but God is the only one who saves human beings. He who created heaven and earth. If we do not trust in God, our effort is in vain, we cannot save ourselves. This girl could have died long ago ...

Mother: [Clapping]. That is correct.

Medium: Without trust, she might have died during her recent period of suffering. But God has protected her until now, so that he puts his enemies to shame. In the family of her departed father things are not well. Among you too, in your clan, there are divisions. So, nobody is willing to intercede for these children.

Mother: That is true, God; that is true, Father.

Medium: No one speaks on behalf of this girl, she is left alone. What a pity!

Mother: That is exact, God.

Medium: What you have to do is [she sang]:

Song V,19: *Luvaana n'tima myééno kwa yááni*

(Give your hearts to him [God] - see: Song V,1)

Solo: 1 Give your hearts to Him

Chorus: Do not be afraid

2 You must be

Chorus: You must be like a wise man

Who built his house on the rock

3 O, the rain *yááya*

Chorus: And the strong wind came

But it [house] did not fall

Medium: I have not much to tell you. Keep on praying to the God of your fathers. He will save you. Certainly, without trust in God, by now, this girl would have followed her father beneath the earth. She is not the only one to suffer so; her relatives suffer too. They look like people left behind on the hilltop¹². Go and join the assembly for prayer.

3rd Case: *Kuyaadika* (Investiture)

[A young girl called *N'kúúnga* had been chosen by *bakúlu* to become *Ndóóná N'luúnga* (Invested Lady for the service of *bakúlu* in the clan). She had been offered arm-rings and leg-rings as insignia of her future function. However she was not pleased with them, and threw them away. From then she was tormented by horrible dreams which reinforced the insistence of *bakúlu*'s call. Her mother introduced her to *n'bikúdi* in order to know what to do for her liberation].

Medium: These things will bring neither joy nor welfare. This is not the first time they exist [in your clan]. In the past, someone was in charge of them. They will cause tensions among the members of the clan.

Why do you ask such a service from a young girl? Are you foolish? It is better for her to be replaced by someone who belongs to another lineage; not hers.

Gather and make arrangements to organise yourselves. Change the lineage, otherwise all the members will die because the members of the other lineage will come and attack them in invisible ways of *kindoki* (sorcery).

These things are *Kinkúlú kyéno* (your tradition)¹³

Mother: I would like to ask your advice, O God: When my kinsmen consulted diviners, they were told to go to the village¹⁴, to organise a meeting with all the parents in order to find someone who can intercede for these children. I would like to know whether this could be organised in a joyful atmosphere.

Medium: That is what I am telling you. Gather and choose another person to entrust this service of *Bakulu*, not this girl; she is too young, she will fail. You, mother, be careful; you must have the wisdom of this world which will tell you how to conduct things.

Mother: You, mother *Koomba* [another *n'bikúdi* and *N'kúúnga*'s paternal aunt], do you agree with these things going back into the family?

Kóómba: This is not my wish.

Someone: She is the father¹⁵.

Mother: Yes, she is the father. Therefore, she must remember she is "*n'kedi Kyoongi wufvétí lééka mu mweelo*" (the shotgun of the protector must stay at the door). In other words, she must be the protector of her children. Thus, she and her lineage must refuse these things, otherwise ... Besides God's power, this young girl could not be alive till now. But ...

Medium: [Interrupted the dialogue between the two women. She looked for the young girl who was hiding among the members of the assembly].
You must pray. Where is *N'kúúnga*? Come near.

Mother: [Speaking to her daughter]: Go forward, sit down on the floor and keep your legs straight.

[The choir introduced the following song while the medium laid her hand on *N'kúúnga*'s shoulder, and continued her revelations].

Song V,20: *Mu Luleendo* (With [his] power ...)

With [his] power, with [his] power

With [his] power, the Father comes

Medium: Father, guide me.

There is nothing else I can see here, mothers, but suffering. You are seeking to know how to overcome this suffering, and how you can liberate the young girl from the bonds with which she is tied. This is what I see.

Pastor: What they are looking for is to know which treatment is suitable for her.

[The kind of revelation the people sought was not limited to physical illnesses. In some cases, relationships among relatives constituted a great concern, such as the continual tension between the children and their father who was against them. The medium encouraged them to love their father and to multiply proofs of their love for him, so that he might change his behaviour towards the children. The next case deals also with the same concern of relationships among colleagues.]

4th Case: *N'fwíllu* (Misfortune)

[Mother *Batéesa* was one of *bisyeelo* (leaders and intercessor for healing) of the Parish. In her everyday life, she practises a small trade to sustain her family. She sells food in the market. For several weeks, she has felt that she was a victim of misfortune: her goods were not being sold as usual; tension characterised her relationships with her companions in the market; she had dreams of bad luck.

After the individual prayer of intercession for the sick, she introduced her case to the medium. She asked the Spirit to ^{enlighten} her. Instead of a direct answer, the medium sang the phrase: "*Wiisa, e Tááta, wakula Sátana*" (Come, O Father, to chase Satan)].

Medium: Have you heard, mother *Batéésa* what was said in the song? We are telling you that relationships are not good among you in the market. Some people wish others would fail in their trade while they make profit. This is why you have failed in your trade. Evil spirits are working in this way: you sell in the market as any human being does, but, during the night, other beings sell too. Your counters are transformed into dancing places.

Batéésa: That is true.

Medium: [Addressing the assembly]. Because of this dance of the invisible beings in her place, when she returns to the market, the next day, to sell, her goods are not sold. Instead of making profit, she runs into deficit. You will improve in your trade, mother *Batéésa*. Do not be surprised about this; do not consult human beings for a solution. Remember that God never deceives. Do you understand?

Batéésa: I do.

Medium: You will earn a little amount of money, God our Father will bless it. He will send his servants to do according to the rules of the Church of *Mpeeve ya N'loongo*, in order to stop Satan. Do you understand?

Batéésa: I do Lord. That is really true.

[When everyone who asked for a revelation had been served, the medium addressed the Pastor about a general report concerning all the members of the parish. He was told what to do for some cases of illness. At the end, the medium said]:

Medium: Stay in peace, I am flying. I thank all of you.

[Greeted the assembly with *kúfi* (a formal clapping among honoured persons). The assembly responded in the same way, and with the beating of drums. The medium left the church. Accompanied by a recessional song:

Toonda N'tinu a Dizúlu (Love the Heavenly King – Song V,5), the assembly left the church and dispersed].

5.4. Healing the Whole Person

The ritual sections: *Mpedozo*, *Matóondo* and *Lunyáákúsu* are described here as parts of the Sunday Worship ritual which takes place in *Dibuundu di Mpeeve a N'loongo* (The Church of the Holy Spirit). These are the three stages in the process of the ritual. For the participants, these are three forms for expressing their beliefs and expectations. In fact, many of them attend the ritual in order to find a solution to a specific need, as it is described in the ritual section of *Lunyáákúsu*.

The songs and prayers said during the ritual section *Mpedozo* underlined faith in the power of the Holy Spirit who empowers Christians to triumph over all kinds of temptations during their lives (Song V,1). This faith was expressed, according to the prophet *Kimbángu*'s teaching, followed by Father *Góónnda* who is walking along the same path. The two religious figures were also invoked by the members as their principal ancestors, although Father *Góónnda* is still alive. Thus, believers prayed to God as well as to their ancestors who are part of their culture.¹⁶

In order to understand this attitude, it would be helpful to refer to the concept of *muuntu* (a human being) according to the *Mpangu* cosmology. Briefly, we can say here that when we define this concept in the *Mpangu* society we must take into account the relationships between all the visible and invisible forces of which the society is composed. In the same way, intercessions and prayers said for the sick are related to the needs in the two areas of life: the visible and the invisible. This is the condition for attaining healing for the whole person.

5.4.1. Major Aspects of Healing

Reflecting on the traditional healers in Zulu society, du Toit. (1985:83) observed that people do not compartmentalise physical treatment as contrasted with psychiatric

treatment. The treatment of body and mind go hand in hand. His observation can be applied to many cases of healing action in Africa in general, and to the *Mpangu* especially. When the patients were given water to drink and to wash in while *bisyeelo* prayed over them during the ritual *Lunyáákúsu*, it was meant to heal all kinds of ailments and misfortunes.

The concept of healing has different implications, depending on the belief of the people, and of the patient, especially in the existential forces, the nature of disease, and disease causation. To be efficacious, the treatment must affect both the cause and the disease itself (ibid.:162). Frequently, continued the author, treatment involves rituals to strengthen and protect an individual.

The Sunday Worship as it is organised by the *E.C.U.S.E.* parish can be interpreted, in a way, as a ritual aimed at healing, strengthening and protecting individuals and the community. The Song-text V,1 can be read as an expression of people's need of being strengthened by the Holy Spirit, so that they might become strong, for now they see themselves as the sheep struggling with all kinds of sufferings (Song-text V,2).

Strengthening and protecting the individual and the community were among the objectives pursued by the rituals *Kizíku* and *Kubóónda*. In the same order of thought, it can be said that the rituals related to *Bankíta* aimed at a similar result for the clans. In the Sunday Worship ritual, the participants saw themselves as a community of sufferers (Song, V,2) who needed to be helped by the Holy Spirit.

5.4.2. Spiritual healing of the Individual

We know the reason why *mpedozo*, a ritual for purification of *bisyeelo* (leaders), takes place before the general assembly of the members. Self purification before an important action is common among Christian worshipping congregations, Catholic or non-Catholic. It is interesting to draw a parallel here between *mpedozo* (ritual for the purification of leaders) as a preparation for worship, and the stage of *kinzoonzi* as a

preparation for *Kizíku*. The actions, in both stages aimed at creating a suitable context which ensures the ritual efficacy.

Thanks to the ritual for purification, the participants feel prepared to take part in the worshipping ritual, since weaknesses and sins make it difficult to communicate with God. This action leads the individual to a personal healing regarding his/her relation with God. The ritual strengthens anyone involved, it enables them to accomplish their duties.

5.4.3. **Healthy for Praise**

Lusíku (Songs of praise) and *lusáámbu* (prayers) were focused on *Matóóndo* (thanksgiving) which was the milestone of the Sunday Worship ritual. The themes for invocation dealt with various aspects of the needs of everyday life. The assembly thanked God for the gift of life, for blessings and protection received during the week. In response, the people sought forgiveness, they expressed love and fidelity to God the Father and to his Son Jesus (Songs V,5 and V,6). In so doing, they walked in their forefathers' footsteps.

However, life is accompanied by all kinds of difficulties: suffering, struggles and temptations which can only be overcome with the help of the Holy Spirit (Song V,4). Similarly, the members of the clan, after experiencing suffering within the community, called on their ancestors for help and guidance. This led to the rituals *Kizíku* and *Kubóónda*. In the ritual of Sunday Worship, the emphasis was placed on the Holy Spirit because He had been chosen as the patron of the Church. However, the reference to the ancestors such as *Kimbángu* and the forefathers, reinforced the fact that the believers saw themselves as a community, the suffering Black community (Songs V,4; V,15; V,17).

The advent of *Kimbángu* as the prophet was regarded as a new birth (Song V,7) for this people. Like other prophets of the Old Testament, he carries on the light of the Word of God. Father *Góónda*, in turn, as a leader, plays the same role (Song V,8). Finally,

belief in the future coming of Jesus on earth keeps believers awake. This is an invitation and a counsel to persevere in faith and to do good deeds (Song V,9).

The following stage, *Ngimbulu* (a song performance), introduced a kind of historic-geographical reflection on the *Kóongo* land, and on *Kimbángu*'s tragedy (Songs V,10 and V,11). Once again, he was introduced as the prophet for *Bandoombe* (Black people). His mission was interrupted by *Bamindéle* (White people) who were against him. He was jailed and sent far away; he died in prison. By God's intervention, Father *Góónnda* was designated to carry on the mission down to our days.

All this section shows the different expressions of praise and thanksgiving used by *Dibuundu di Mpeeve ya N'loongo*. In order to ensure a full participation in the ritual for praising the Lord, the members should have good health which enables them to be part of it. This was what the Pastor meant when he spoke of health for the members of the Church. Lack of health, as a disability, he said, could well prevent the faithful from being active participants in the Sunday Worship of Praise and Thanksgiving for all their blessings.¹⁷ Therefore, it is a duty for the members to pray to God for the sick, in terms of asking for strength and health, so that they can join the community for praise. The ritual *lunyáákúsu* responded to this need.

5.4.4. Social Healing

During the ritual performance, several cases involved a patient or an unfortunate individual, however, the event was lived as a communal concern. It affected the small society, either the nucleus family, the lineage, or the clan. The society and its culture play a determinant role regarding illness and healing because of a series of varying boundaries which tie a person to his/her social and cultural environment.

As we have seen, according to the concept of interrelation which characterises *Mpangu* thought, a person is regarded as essentially and inextricably linked with other beings, human and non human, visible and invisible. Therefore, certain causes of illness and the healing action are often regarded as a result of this interaction. The four cases

submitted to the medium: (*n'fú, fúna, kuyaadika, n'fwílu*) illustrated the existence of the reciprocating relationships among the members of the clan to which patients belonged.

None of these four cases which were presented in the *lunyáákúsu* (healing) ritual was considered by *Bakóongo-Mpangu* as “illness for hospital”.¹⁸

N'fú: Illustrated a case provoked by a spirit of the dead, the cause of various illnesses for that girl. The second case, *Fúna* (bad luck), related also to the invisible powers hidden among the patient's kinship while the third case, *Kuyaadika* (investiture) provoked tension between *N'kúúnga*'s clan and their *bakúlu*, as well as between her patrilineage and her matrilineage, the clan. We can see that the patient was not the only one concerned, her illness involved other kinships.

The fourth case, *N'fwílu* (misfortune) went beyond kinship relationships, beyond the clan. The invisible beings who – according to the medium's message – danced on mother *Batéésa*'s counter did not belong to her clan. The suspected persons were her food-seller companions in the market. She had “seen” them in her dreams. The medium interpreted the case as Satan's action.

It is important to note that both the clans of the four women, as well as themselves, were regarded as “ill” or unfortunate, since they were under the power of evil spirits (1st, 2nd cases), or they lived in conflict with their *bakúlu* (3rd case). The fourth case showed that even the market was ill, that is, the relationships among its people were bad; even its space was affected.

In all these cases, the attempt to heal sought to redress the situation and to protect the entire community which was in risk of becoming the victim of the influence of evil spirits. For a solution to each case, the medium invited patients and other persons to pray and to persevere in prayer. In so doing, the person had to intercede for his/her own healing. They joined the community in prayer. I see this as the way in which the members of *E.C.U.S.E.* illustrated their ministry which was to intercede for the sick,

and not to heal; for God is the one who heals illnesses. This was a proof of their fidelity to the prophet *Kimbángu*'s teaching, which forbade the use of any symbolic object in order to obtain healing. The ideal was to imitate Jesus' example who healed people by God's power.

Song V,20: *Mu luleendo* ... (With [his] power ...) reinforced this attitude towards the healing ministry. The objective was to "heal", that was primarily the aim, to improve the relationships among the members within the families, the clan, and wherever people lived and worked. And then, to be liberated from any physical disorder. Besides the insistence on prayer, the medium suggested specific actions related to the clan. She said:

"Gather and make arrangements to organise yourselves ... Gather and choose another person whom to entrust this service of *bakúlu* ... You must have the wisdom of this world which will tell you how to conduct things",
(3rd case).

The medium was certain that the solution could be found only through "gathering", *kinzoonzi*, since the problem involved the beings of the visible world and those of the invisible one. She was afraid of the worst which could happen if *bakúlu* were angry with the clan, the young girl could die. In the same order of thought, Antoine warned Pierre's people during the ritual *Kiziku*: "In order to protect you, as well as ourselves, *ngaanga* (healer) suggests that we proceed slowly and wisely. We must involve the members of *mbáansa* (city), [land of the living] as well as those of *n'díimba* (valley), [land of the dead]".

Fear of anger on the part of *bakúlu* characterised the interventions made by the medium. She, herself needed to be assisted in her duties. She asked God for guidance: "Father, guide me".

In the fourth case: *N'fwíllu* (misfortune), the emphasis was made on the existence of the two worlds and their inhabitants. With certainty, the medium explained to mother

Batéésa: “You sell in the market as any human being does, but during the night, other beings sell too. Your counters are transformed into dancing places”. This statement refers to the belief in an inverted social organisation which characterises the *Kóongo-Mpangu* cosmology: daytime is regarded at the same time as “a day” for the citizens of the visible world, and as “a night” for those of the invisible world. The relations between the two categories of inhabitants are relations of time, space, and cause, stressed MacGaffey,(1986:43). It was obvious that the invisible “dancers” to whom the medium referred represented groups of spirits, simply called *mpeeve zímbi* (evil spirits) or *matébo* (ghosts) described in the introductory chapter.

Lunyáákúsu, as part of the ritual, played an important role which affected the ritual as a whole. It combined several aspects of ritual actions such as *kinzoonzi*, revelations, and healing process. Similar procedures sustained the four cases described in this section of the thesis. All of them began with an inquiry: relatives or the patients themselves introduced the case in order to find out the reason why they were in that condition. Through the dialogue with the medium, the answer was “found” or at least suggested. Then came healing actions: laying on of hands, drinking water, pouring out the water on the body, praying over the patients ... These were the main attitudes/actions throughout the Sunday Worship ritual, as well as the four healing rituals described in this thesis. In the two last chapters I will examine this aspect which reveals the common structure of *Mpangu* healing rituals.

To conclude this section, it could be said that, at first glance, it seems that the physical aspect of healing is less important for the members of *DMN*, for they attach a peculiar cause to each illness. They are more interested in “healing” the cause rather than the illness itself in its physical manifestations. However, healing actions affect different kinds of personal or communal problems caused by various links by which each person is related to his/her visible and the invisible environments. In so doing, the Church tries to liberate individuals and the community from all kinds of pressures, so that they may enjoy a harmonious life. The belief that illnesses can be healed by the power of the Holy Spirit is very strong among the believers of *DMN*. Some go to extreme limits when they refuse any medicine, except when the medium had counselled them to take it.

Healing the whole person is the expectation of all the members of all the denominations which constitute the *Mpangu* society. Individual healing can be considered as a way of ensuring the health of the entire society.

¹NOTES

Chapter 5 : E.C.U.S.E. (The Church of the Holy Spirit)

¹ **Kimbanguism:** A religious movement founded by the prophet Simon *Kimbángu*, in April 1921 in the region of Lower Congo (Janzen & MacGaffey, 1974:126). Simon *Kimbángu* was chosen by God to save the Blacks from their sins (MacGaffey, 1986:114). According to informants, one of the objectives of *Kimbángu*'s mission was to bring the *Bakóongo* to pray to God according to their traditional customs. He was jailed the same year by the colonial authorities, was sent far away [about 2,000 km] to Elisabethville [now *Lubumbashi*], where he died in prison on 12 October 1951, (MacGaffey, 1983:41; Janzen & MacGaffey, 1974:126). The Church is formally known as: "The Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon *Kimbangu*" (*EJCSK*), and obtained legal recognition of the Zaïrean Government in the 1970's. Nowadays, the Church has spread beyond the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Africa and Europe (Janzen, 1974:122-23). In his studies, MacGaffey (1983:215) refers to these branches by the acronym *DMN* which is an abbreviation of the *Kikóongo* name: *Dibuundu diá Mpééve ya/a N'loong* (Church of the Holy Spirit).

² Clapping in threes: Symbolically refers to the Holy Trinity (God in three Persons). By clapping in this way, people acknowledge and revere the Holy Trinity to whom they entrust each activity undertaken during the ritual for worship. For example, after the entrance in to the church, the leader invited the assembly to thank the Holy Trinity; he said: "We give thanks for our entrance, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit". Actions in threes occurred in other contexts of healing rituals related to *bakúlu* and *bankíta*, e.g.

- the formal greetings of *makúfi* consisted of clapping three times [see the section: *kinzoonzi*]. For several times, *Táá Ngáanga* asked three kola nuts [section: *Mbóóka*].
- during the ritual *Nyoká-N'káwu*, medicine had to be taken three times, and the ritual idiom "*Kipú yaa ... Kítuuka*" was said three times
- Song IV,10 v.19 referred to this number: "*Kitátú kí Nkíta*" (the number three required by *Nkíta*).
- During the research in the field, I was asked by *Budyóóngo* to pay *kitátú kí nkíta* before she could provide information regarding *Bankíta* and *Bansúmbe* and afterwards. She meant, an amount of money fixed according to the multiples of three [3-9-12-15 ...].

³ **Táátá Goonda:** He is the present leader of the Section of "*Dibuundu di Mpeeve a N'loongo*" (*DMN*) (the Church of the Holy Spirit) among the *Mpangu*. According to my informants, this man is the successor nominated by the prophet *Kimbángu* himself in a vision, before he died in prison. A conflict for succession resulted then, and provoked the creation of other Churches under *Kimbángu*'s guidance. Song V,11 below recalls this "vision" as it says:

"In prison *Kimbángu* said:
'Do not be afflicted
From *Madimba* will come a redeemer [...]
When you go back to your country *Kóongo*
You will see a little child'..."

In verse 12 and the chorus which follows, the song explicitly introduces *Goonda* as the one who was chosen. It says:

"Who is this one?
He is our *Táátá Goonda*".

⁴ **Móóyo:** This is a kind of idiom which is used at the conclusion of the prayers. The meaning in this context is "life". It refers to the Holy Spirit in terms of acknowledgement that the Spirit received from God inhabits the believers. They repeat: the Spirit's life remains with us, in us. It has been said in chapter 1 that life is at the core of *Mpangu* thought. The teaching of *DMN* stressed that the forefathers

were given God's Spirit, explained the pastor in section 5.1. The Spirit transformed them, as expressed in Song V,7: *Va kikéle*:

"In the past we were nothing
But since *Kimbángu* answered God's call
He called us to come out of darkness
Now God gave us the Spirit."

The members of the Church believe that the Spirit is giver of life (*luziingu*). He maintains it, sustains it when he heals illnesses and liberates people from all kinds of boundaries. This is a reason why the Spirit is associated with life and health.

⁵ Middle *Kóongo*: This reference indicates the historical and geographical location of the *Bakóongo* ethnic group. We have seen in chapter 1 that at the International Conference in Berlin, in 1885, the Europeans drew the colonial boundaries in Africa. It resulted in the *Kóongo* ethnic group being divided into three groups which now represent three nations: Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (cap: *Kinshasa*), and the Republic of Congo (cap: *Brazzaville*). In Song V,11 the three nations are respectively referred as "*Kóongo* of the beginning" (v.6) or "the first *Kóongo*" (v.9), to indicate Angola. "The middle *Kóongo* (v.7) or the second *Kóongo*" (v.10) refer to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Finally, "the last *Kóongo*" (v.8) or "the third *Kóongo*" (v.11) indicate the Republic of Congo.

⁶ Strophe: The term "strophe" *kitóólo* is used when a person sings. It is the part of the song which conveys the message, as the proverb says: "*Nkuungá ka wáá ko, kaánsi kitóólo*" (It is not the song that is important, but the strophe). Here the sound produced by the beats of the log-drum is considered as a human voice which conveys messages.

⁷ *N'fú*: The name of an illness which can be described as the presence of the spirit of a dead person in a living person. In some cases, the existence of such a spirit can be seen or not by other people in the society. This cohabitation always results in misfortune which can take the form of bad luck, illness, even death ...

⁸ "Father", "God", "Lord": These are the terms used by the patients/clients when they address the medium. This is the best example which shows how deeply people believed that they were speaking to the Spirit of God himself, no matter who the medium was (a man or a woman). They were certain that they addressed the Spirit, the One they were given by God the Father. This was the way the participants spoke to the mediums during the performance of other rituals described in this thesis. The role of the medium is taken seriously as a reality different from a fairy show in the play.

⁹ Fathers: This term refers to all the members of the father's lineage. Sociologically speaking, a child has more than one father, more than one mother, in the *Mpangu* society, as explained in chapter 1.

¹⁰ The two proverbs were given as an answer in order to explain the cause of the bad luck. The medium used an analogy to describe the situation in which that woman and her children lived. The first proverb meant that there was no protector for these children. They were left to themselves. Therefore, anyone could do what they wished to them.

¹¹ The second proverb tried to explain the possible reason why evil persons do harm to these children. It was for the pleasure of doing harm, since no one protected them.

¹² Hilltop: This is an open space, where nothing can be protected against any attack, there is no security. Things abandoned on the hilltop are exposed to every kind of danger. This applied to these children.

¹³ *Kinkúlu*: A synonymous term for "tradition" or what the people had inherited from the *bambúta* (the elders) who became their ancestors. Janzen (1978:37) refers to it in terms of *Kisi-Nsi* (native culture) as opposed to *Kimundéle* (culture of the White man).

¹⁴ In other words, to go to their home village, the village of their origins. The importance of the village of origin can be explained in terms of the link with *bakúlu* who still "live" there, where they were buried. Although they are spirits, and can therefore move easily to join relatives where they dwell, it is crucial that all the important meetings be held in the village of their origins. In the *Kizíku* ritual, discussed above, the members of the clan gathered at *Makáánga*, which was their birthplace, where the elders were buried. In the section on *Bankíta*, *Makáya* invited her relatives to go from *Kinshasa* to their village in order to perform the ritual.

¹⁵ "She is the father": See note 9. Although she is a female parent, her relationships with the patient are that of father to child. What is important here is to accomplish her duties determined by her social position.

¹⁶ This is a question of concern for the *kimbanguists*. Through their teaching they insist on the reasons why they make requests to Simon *Kimbángu* "the Helper of the Spirit of Truth". They say: The *Kimbanguists* do not pray to man but to God himself (Janzen & MacGaffey, 1974:127).

¹⁷ The material aspect must also be taken into account, that is, the members of the Church with good health can work and gain money which they can offer to the Church. Spiritually, when believers are in good relationship with God and with one another, this will increase the quality of the praise offered to God. It is the same in the clan: healthy offspring make the clan stronger.

¹⁸ Identification of illness is a fundamental principle before performing any healing ritual. *Kimbééfó kí Nzámmbi* (illness from God) and *kimbééfó kí báántu* (illness caused by human beings) are the main categories acknowledged by the *Mpangu* (see: Janzen, 1978:9). The study of four healing rituals described in the thesis showed that to other groups of beings could be attributed the cause of illness and misfortunes. The first and the fourth cases reported in section *Lunyáákúsu* were attributed to *mpeeve zímbe* (evil spirits) and *matébo* (ghosts). The second was thought to have been caused by *bandoki* (sorcerers) while the third dealt with *bakúlu*. All the suffering referred to in the rituals *Kizíku* and *Bankíta* was attributed to them too. The source of pain endured by the young mother of twins was not clearly defined in the ritual *Kubóónda*; her twins were asked to heal her. On the contrary, one of the twins of the second pair, was blamed for being responsible for their bad health.

PART TWO

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

OF

FOUR MPANGU HEALING RITUALS

CHAPTER 6

RITUAL ACTIONS AND SYMBOLS AS EXPRESSIONS OF MPANGU THOUGHT

Introduction

Part Two of this thesis focuses on a comparative analysis of the four healing rituals described in Part One. The objective is to identify the common elements which characterise *Mpangu* healing rituals and the features of religious thought expressed by them. The aim is not simply to present and analyse verbal expressions of religious thought, which will be the main focus in Chapter 7, but also to explore the nature of religious concept which is evident in the structure, actions, and objects employed in the rituals, which is the focus of Chapter 6.

As can be seen in the accompanying diagrams, each ritual can be divided into segments and sub-segments of activity which are in turn composed of an ensemble of discrete ritual actions. The segments and ritual actions indicated in bold type are those named by the participants themselves. Those ritual actions indicated in roman type have been classified by the author as distinct, observable ritual activities for purposes of analysis.

The diagrams clearly illustrate that each of the four rituals is divided into two major segments, the first of which can be regarded as a preparation for, and introductory stage to the main ritual itself. The second major segment often carries the name of the main ritual, with the exception here of *Nyóká-N'káwu*. These can be called respectively the opening segment and the main segments of the ritual. The following discussion begins with a comparative analysis of the ritual actions which take place in the opening and main segments, and then continues with an exploration of the religious concepts which these ritual actions reflect. From this analysis we will gain a clearer idea of the nature of *Mpangu* spirituality, that is, the way the *Mpangu* seek to cause their religious behaviour to conform to their communal beliefs.

Figure 3: Structure of the Ritual *Kiziku*

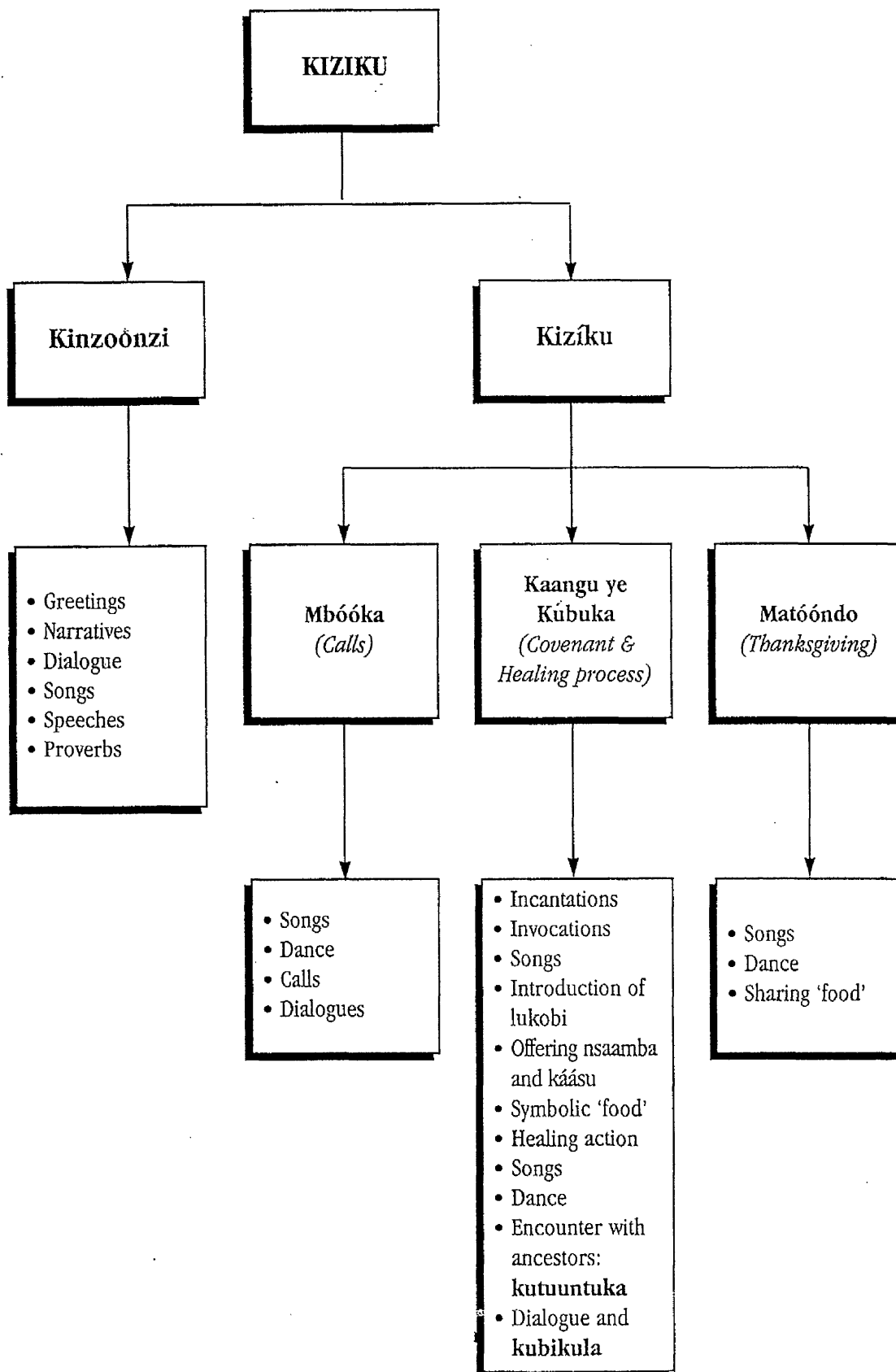


Figure 4: Structure of the Ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu*

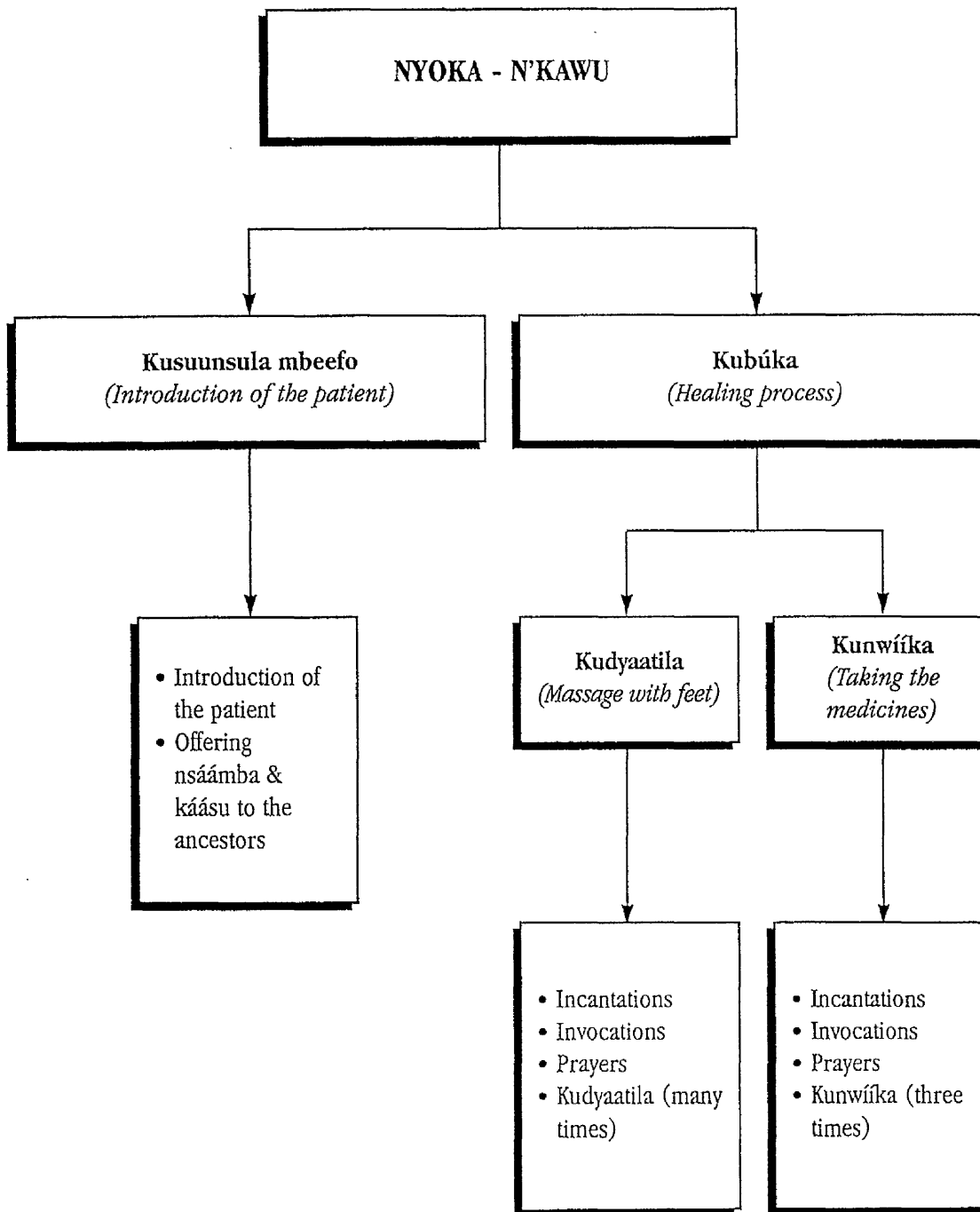


Figure 5: Structure of the Ritual *Kubóonda*

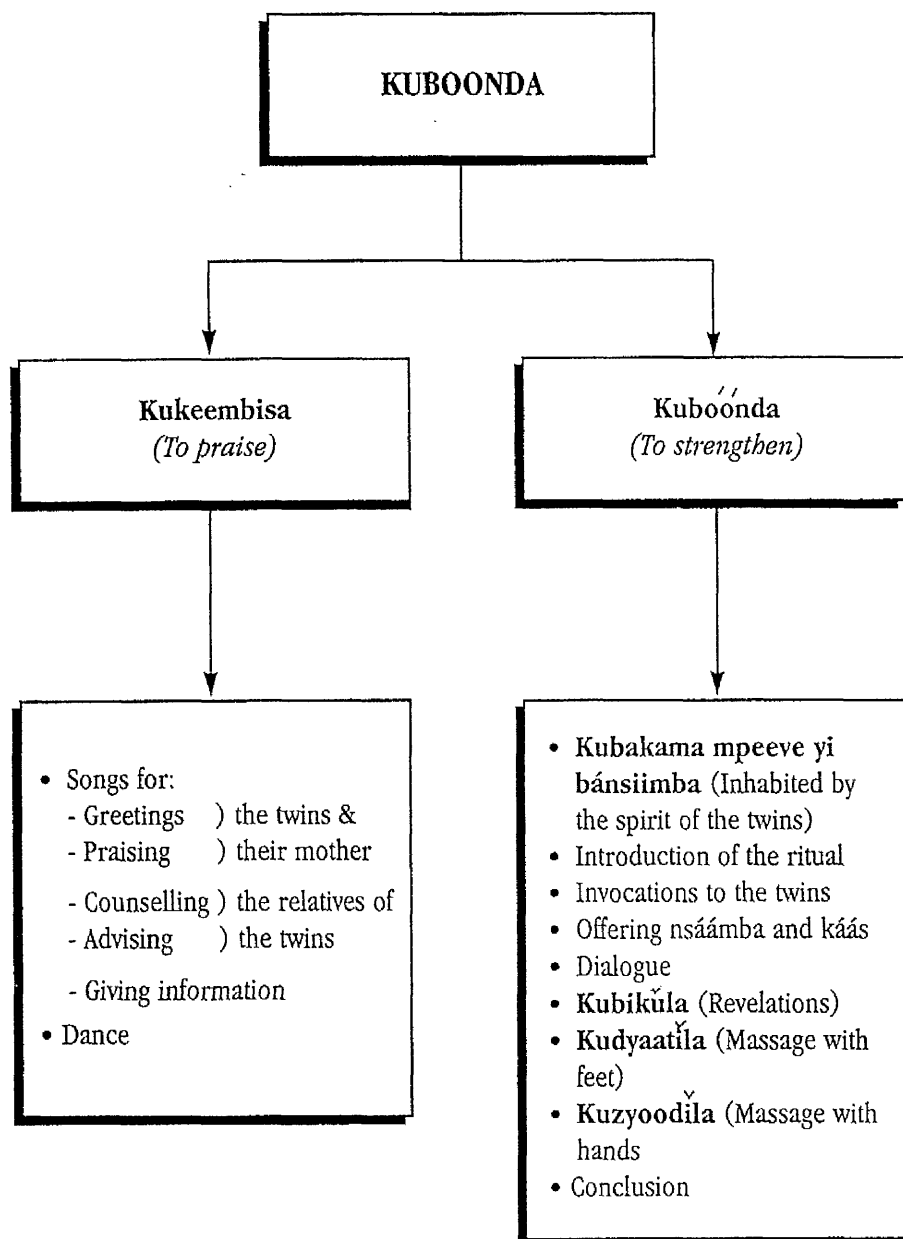
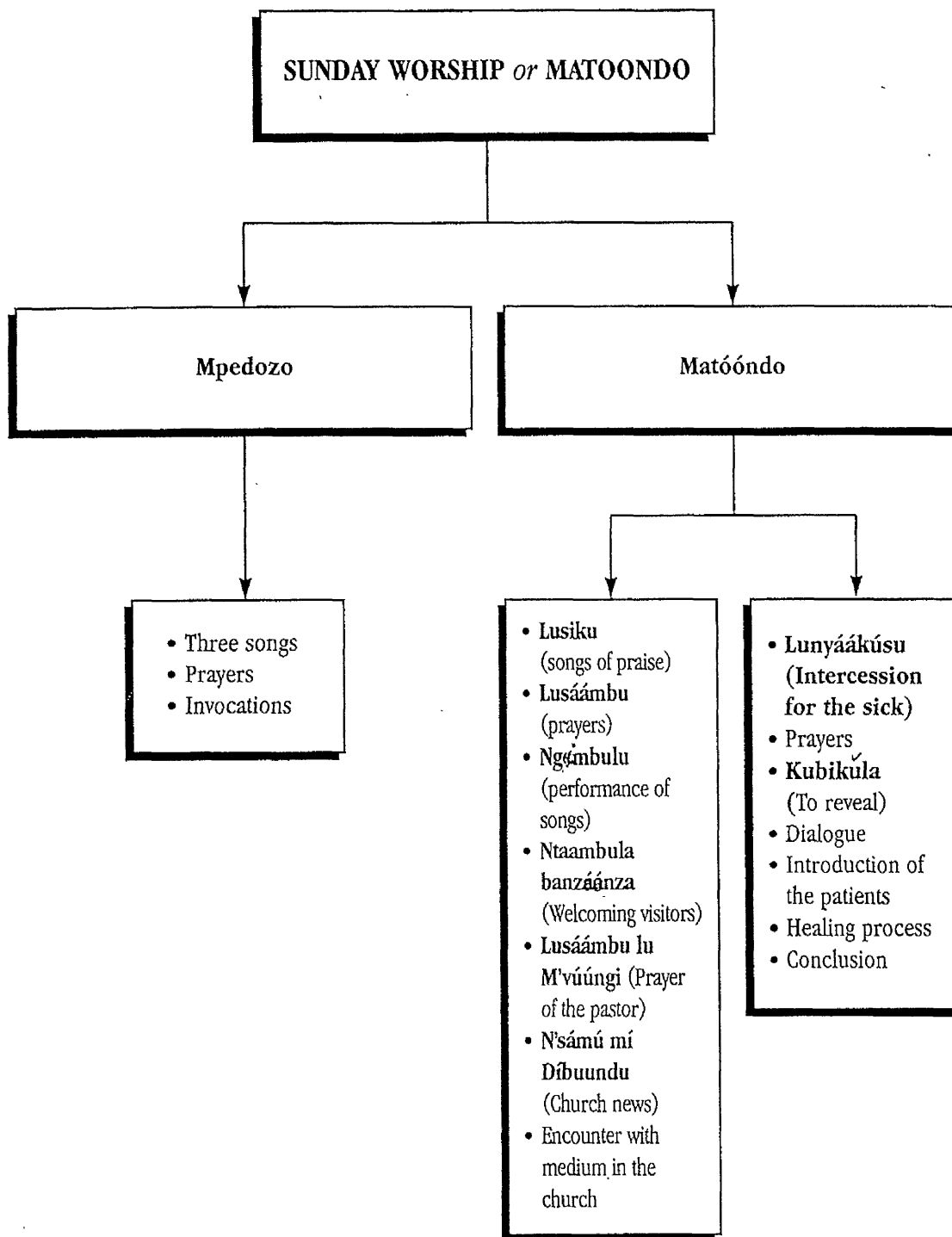


Figure 6: Structure of the Ritual *Matóóndo*



6.1. Ritual Opening Segment: The Preparation

Ritual actions include various kinds of activities, such as dance, invocations, songs and healing gestures. The beginning of each healing ritual is marked by specific actions and symbols such as greetings, sacralisation of the space, praising, *kinzoonzi*, introduction of the patient, and the purification. This part of the ritual involves primarily the members of the visible community and prepares them for the main segment of the ritual.

6.1.1. Greetings

Greeting each other is a value which is inherent to *Mpangu* culture. A claim made by the spokesman during *Kiziku*, was in fact to remind his people of this important value of that custom: “According to our customs, it is expected that people greet each other, when they meet, in order to be informed regarding their health”. The forms of greeting differ according to the nature and the circumstances of the ritual. The usual forms are the exchange of *kúfi* (special form of greeting between notabilities), sprinkling palm wine and small pieces of kola nut in the four directions of the ritual site, and the welcoming dance which is accompanied with clapping.

6.1.2. Sacralisation of the Space

In some ways, the actions for greeting are part of the sacralisation of the ritual space. During this process, three elements are used, those of speech, gestures and symbols—all of which occur simultaneously. Some examples mentioned above illustrate this stage of the ritual. *Budyóongo* sprinkles palm wine, distributes kola nut while she introduces herself. She addresses her ancestors asking for permission to answer my questions for investigation. She behaves similarly at the beginning of the ritual *Kubóonda* which she introduces. Actions and symbols used for the sacralisation of the space complete the greetings.

The space as well as the participants are involved in the actions of sacralisation. In some cases, the space is known to be already sacred because it is the dwelling of spiritual entities. This occurs in the ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu*, where the patient and her mother enter *Tádá Mfúmu*'s room where *Bankíta* are kept. On the contrary, in E.C.U.S.E., when *bisyeelo* (leaders) enter *nzo yi mávaanga* (the house for realisations) for their purification, the site becomes temporarily sacred, thanks to the prayers and invocations to the Holy Spirit.

6.1.3. Songs

The songs performed at the beginning of the ritual express the major themes which affect the ritual itself. Welcoming and praising the Twins and their mother (e.g. songs IV,1; IV,2) underscore the ritual *Kukeembisa Bansiimba*. The songs also define the main aim of the ritual (II,1 and V,1).

The diagrams show that in three rituals the participants come together and sing, preparing themselves for the ritual they intend to perform. In the case of *Kubóónda*, besides the fact of praising, the songs describe important values to be taken into account during the ritual, namely the fact that the twins are special children (IV,4; IV,6). The relatives and friends of the twins are given advice regarding their relationships with the twins and with their neighbours (IV,3; IV,5).

The content of the songs sung during *mpedozo* indicates the needs expressed by *bisyeelo*, that is, force and guidance from the Holy Spirit. This assistance prepares them for entering the ritual "world". As to the ritual *Kizíku*, the song II,1 introduces the objective of the ritual: re-establishing good relationships among the members of the clan in order to restore harmony.

6.1.4. Dance

As indicated in the diagrams, only in the ritual *Kubóónda* does dance take place in the opening segment. The songs, clapping and dance serve to bring the participants

together. It is a kind of invitation to join those who are already involved in dancing. Actually, this dance is started by one person [the grandmother of the baby-twins], who is joined by others.

The dance involves a simple movement of circling around the twins and their mother. This is a major feature of the opening segment for this ritual. It introduces the participants into the main segment. During this period everyone is getting prepared for entering the ritual experience.

Evidently, when suddenly *Zoomba* changes her rhythm of dancing and singing, the assembly understands that the time for preparation is over. The ritual is therefore introduced formally by the expert who speaks directly to the spirit of the twins present in the medium.

6.1.5. Narrative

The narratives which take place at the beginning of the ritual *Kiziku* serve as a tool for setting moods. The content of the story hints at the major objective of *kinzoonzi* and hence, at the ritual itself. The story traces allegorically what is expected to be done by the members of the clan. The narratives as well as the songs invite the assembly to take part in listening to the story. In this way, they are prepared for playing their role in the ritual.

6.1.6. Speech: *Kinzoonzi*

Kinzoonzi takes place before the ritual with the purpose of defining problematic situations, and proposing solutions. The speech following Antoine's narrative is a procedure for approaching the divided people, so that they can be united in seeking harmony together.

Some important techniques employed in the speech are the use of the term *bayááya* (brothers/sisters, relatives) which emphasises the kinship among the participants, and

the reference to *bakulu*. The speech focuses on *lukobi* as the communal symbol belonging to the clan as a whole. Continual reference is made to *bakulu* (ancestors) to whom the clan belongs. Intentionally, the spokesman conducts the speech in the way to achieve its objective, that is, enabling the people to perform the ritual. Three of the proverbs used in the speech call upon the sensibilities of the members:

“Nzo ga kátí kí gátá básáá yááwu”

(A house is expected to stand in the middle of the village).

“Gó mweene mpaangi áku ukutómbókéle, n’fúnú kákúvwiídi”

(When you see your relative coming to you, that means he/she needs you).

“Kífwa, kiké; kisaala, kííngi”

(Dead thing, worthless; lasting thing, more important).

The first and the third proverbs emphasise the purpose of the meeting which is rebuilding the clan. It is symbolised by “*nzó*” (a house) and “*kisaala*” (lasting thing). The second proverb underscores the necessity of collaboration and mutual aid among the members of the clan. The participants are asked to think of the importance of the clan which is the basic structure of life in the society. The clan is expected to last. Therefore, everyone is urged to contribute to rebuild it.

Other oratorical techniques such as dialogue and *bimbímbi* (tags) are employed in the speech with the intention of pulling the people together in the participation of the ritual. The dialogue often occurs in question – response style between the orator and the assembly:

Orator: *Bayááya!*

Assembly: *Eh!*

Orator: Is there any problem?

Assembly: There is no problem.

Bimbímbi (tags) are practised with reference to the communal tradition. The orator says the first part of the sentence, the assembly completes it with the conventional well-known word or phrase:

Orator: *Keembo dí n'kisi ...*
(The celebrity of *n'kisi ...*)
Assembly: *Ngaanga kimooya!*
(During its owner's lifetime).

All the examples cited above illustrate various means for preparing the assembly to participate as "one" in the ritual. The purpose of *kinzoonzi* is to unite the assembly so that the ritual can take place. *Kizíku* is the only ritual among the four which is directly preceded by *kinzoonzi*.

6.1.7. Introduction of the Patient

The preparation of the participants for the ritual is seen here in terms of relationships between the expert-healer and the patient. The *bisyeelo* (leaders/intercessors), *m'bíkudi* (revealers), and mediums ensure mediation between the participants and spiritual entities. They discuss cases and give advice to the people who seek solutions to their problems. *Táá Mfúmu* (sacred chief) and *Táá Ngáanga* (healer) are devoted to the healing process during *Kizíku*. They have been chosen and made sacred by *bakúlu* for serving the clans.

Before starting the healing process, the patients are presented to "expert-healers" and mediums who in turn introduce them to their own ancestors for assistance, as it occurs in the ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu*; before proceeding for *kudyaatila*, in terms of healing, *Táá Mfúmu* offers palm wine and kola nut to his own ancestors. The double introduction of the patient – to the healer and to the ancestors – makes easier the passage from the preparation to the main segment of the ritual. The medium, during the ritual *E.C.U.S.E.*, calls upon God for guidance: "Father, guide me". The patients express great

confidence in their healers. They entrust them with the care of their lives. Thanks to this action, the latter are given freedom regarding the procedure for the healing process.

Through the prayers and songs performed during the ritual *Mpedozo*, *bisyeelo* introduce the community as “patient”. They see themselves as the sick persons suffering in this world (Songs V,2 and V,3). They call upon the Holy Spirit for assistance. This action prepares them for entering the church for praising God and interceding for the sick, in the main segment of the ritual.

6.1.8. Invocations

Only one of the four rituals described has the invocations as part of the opening ritual segment. The three songs (V,1; V,2 and V,3), the free prayers and invocations which compose the *Mpedozo* segment of the E.C.U.S.E. service must be considered as one ritual action preparing *bisyeelo* for their duty.

6.2. Main Segment: The Ritual Itself

The transition from the preparations of the opening segment to the main ritual also reflects a shift in focus of ritual actions toward invisible spiritual entities. The major common actions in this part of the ritual are the encounter with the spiritual entities, incantations, invocations and prayers, healing gestures, revelations and celebrations in thanksgiving.

6.2.1. Encounter With Spiritual Entities

This is the “real” point of departure of performance of a healing ritual. In three of the four healing rituals described in the thesis, the encounter with spiritual entities is noticeable by the assembly.

At a given moment, during the ritual process, something “strange” happens. It modifies the atmosphere of the assembly. The forms of occurrence vary according to the

circumstances. It can be a sudden cessation of dancing, or an unforeseen change of cadence, or strange behaviour. This occurs in the ritual *Kizíku*. After calling upon the ancestors through the song II,10 the dance, *Táá Ngáánga* suddenly stops dancing, he starts shouting a dialogue with the participants. He falls to the ground, remains for a while, he stands up, and the dance resumes.

Similarly, in the ritual *Kubóónda*, *Zoomba* changes her rhythm of dancing and singing, she behaves strangely, she jumps around the baby twins and their mother. She is followed by two little girls who move with their eyes closed. These signs indicate the “presence” of the spirit of the Twins among the participants. This enables *Budyóóngo* to act according to her status as senior in the service of *Bankíta* and *Bansíimba*. She introduces formally the ritual.

The encounter with spiritual entities is already there, before the ritual *E.C.U.S.E.* begins. The young woman is inhabited by the Spirit, she behaves differently from other members of the Church. Her intervention is greatly appreciated during *Lunyáákúsu*.

Two forms of encounter with spiritual entities emerge from the three rituals: *kutuuntuka* (trance) and *kubakama mpeeve* (to be inhabited by spirit). Both occur in *Kizíku*, as illustrated above. *Táá Ngáánga* is inhabited by the spirits of the ancestors whereas at the end of the ritual, a woman has a trance, an ancestress speaks to the assembly through her. These forms of encounter can happen either to the leader, an expert, or anyone chosen by the spiritual entities. This person becomes the medium during the ritual.

Other signs of mediumship occurring in the four rituals are: producing a loud scream, falling down on the ground or speaking a strange language ... The return of *lukóbi* among the members of the clan (in *Kizíku*) offers another form of getting in touch with spiritual entities. From then on the ritual moves from one stage to another. In some cases, as we will see later, the transition from the visible community to the invisible one entails a change of leaders and their roles. Nothing similar is noticeable in the ritual

Nyóká-N'káwu in which *Táá Mfúmu* speaks to his ancestors as if they were always present with him.

The interaction with the spiritual entities constitutes the highest point of each healing ritual described. The efficacy of the healing process depends on the degree of interaction between the two groups of participants, the visible and the invisible.

In all four healing rituals the spiritual entities are consulted via mediums regarding the conduct of the ritual, the causes of misfortune and illnesses. Expected responses result from the interpretation of symbols by the participants. Certain actions such as dance, *kutuuntuka* (trance), *kubakama mpeeve* (to be inhabited by a spirit) are interpreted as means for conveying otherworldly messages.

6.2.2. Calls, Incantations, Invocations and Prayers

These expressions are analysed as "Verbal Expressions" in chapter 7. As ritual actions, they enable the participants to address spiritual entities during the ritual. This is another means for attracting the attention of the invisible beings to the concrete situation of the visible community.

The four actions are linked according to a progressive movement. The calls aim at focusing the attention of spirits on the ritual. Through the incantations, the healer recalls the sources of his/her power. In so doing, he/she emphasises the primacy of the invisible beings and ensures the trust of the patients in the healing process. In some cases, incantations accompany the healing gestures. This occurs in the ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu* when *Táá Mfúmu* massages *Makyéése* while pronouncing incantations. In the ritual *Kiziku*, incantations serve to warn the assembly before establishing any covenant with the ancestors (see: note 16 in Chapter 2).

The invocations and prayers are addressed directly to the spiritual entities asking for specific favours, assistance and protection, or for thanksgiving. In the ritual process, the participants do not distinguish clearly between prayer and invocation. When the

leader invites the assembly to pray, the people respond either by individual and spontaneous petitions, or by reciting together a prayer known to everybody. These two types of prayer are employed in section *Lusaambu* (prayer), in E.C.U.S.E..

Invocations and prayers are an important part of the rituals because they constitute free expression of individuals and their communal feelings. The leader, healer, patient, or any other participant is free to invoke and to pray. The content often describes afflictions and sufferings, among other important themes, and therefore, the need for assistance (see Pastor's prayer in chapter 5).

6.2.3. *Kubúka* (Healing Process)

The healing actions, in the main segment of the rituals, are indicated by different terms: *kubúka* (healing procedure) which refers to the action of applying the medicines to the patients; *kubóonda* (strengthening), *lunyáákúsu* (interceding for the sick). The dominant forms of healing gestures are the massage – either *kudyaatila* (massage with feet) or *kuzyoodila* (massage with hands), and *kunwíika* (taking the medicines). The massages are mainly physical gestures applied on the body in order to relax painful muscles. In two of the four healing rituals the massages are followed by drinking a medicine solution or water (see the rituals *Nyóká-N'káwu* and E.C.U.S.E.).

Other forms of gestures used for healing are: blessing, laying hands upon the patients, painting their bodies with white and red clay, patting painful areas of the body and blowing into the air. The actions are more symbolic than concrete. They mean more for individuals as social members than for their own physical healing.

6.2.4. *Kubikula* (Revelations)

We have seen in Chapter 1 that the *Mpangu* concept of healing does not make a distinction between psychological, mental and social causes of illness. The efficacy of healing actions is measured according to the influence exercised by the healer and the ancestors on the causes of illness. The quest for discovering possible causes of illness

occurs in the four healing rituals. Thanks to the mediumship, the hidden aspects of the illness can be revealed through *kutuuntuka* (trance), *kubakama mpeeve* (inhabited by spirit) or through special knowledge received from the spiritual entities. *Kubikula* results then from the communication between the medium and the spiritual entities who provide the special knowledge.

There is no evident action for revelation in the ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu*. However, *Táá Mfúmu* hints at it when he pronounces incantations:

“Look! Regarding the snake:
Anyone who put it in the body of this girl
Be it from *kitááta* (patrilineage), or from *kimááma*
(matrilineage, clan), from a friend, or from an enemy” ...

The healer intends to find out about the causes of the illness or misfortune with which he deals.

In some cases, the patients themselves perform *kubikula* when they are in a trance or inhabited by spirits. *Basáwula*'s report illustrates this aspect, when *Makáya* reveals the causes of her illness and the misfortune of the family. The relatives often ask the medium to reveal the hidden causes of illness and misfortune. This is the objective of the dialogue between the medium and patients and their relatives, during the ritual *Lunyáákúsu*, in E.C.U.S.E.. *M'bikúdi* (revealers) are always believed to be under the influence of the invisible powers. Therefore, their messages are taken seriously by the patients. This also explains the reason why the medium is asked questions by the assembly, at the end of *Kizíku*

6.2.5. Sharing “Food” and “Drink”

This is more a symbolic than a real meal. It is represented by different actions in the healing rituals under sharing of “food” and “drink”. The offering of *nsáámba* (palm wine) and *káásu* (kola nut) occurs frequently in the four rituals. Besides the aspects of greeting and welcoming represented by these objects, one can see the symbolic sharing

of “food”. Actually, the palm is poured out on *lukóbi*, on *Bankíta*, as well as sprinkled on the patients and the assembly. When there is sufficient kola nut, after the spiritual entities have been served, everyone in the assembly receives a small piece and eats it. This is the symbolic sharing between the two communities, the visible and the invisible.

In *Kizíku* the blood of the goat is first mixed with the content of *lukobi*, then sprinkled on the assembly – as a sign of their covenant. The meat and chicken flesh are distributed in turn to the participants. *Zoomba* (in *Kubóónda*) asks for *lémbá-lémba* leaves which she eats and shares with others. A different form of sharing is the fact of drinking from the *kódi* (a shell of snail) which has belonged to a specific ancestor, as occurs in the ritual *Nyóká-N’káwu*. In each of these circumstances, it is believed that the ancestors also share this “food” and “drink”.

Given the fact that the use of symbols other than water is forbidden in **E.C.U.S.E.**, the sharing is accomplished when the participants drink that water and pour it out on their bodies.

6.2.6. Concluding Ritual Actions

The *Mpangu* healing rituals can be *very long*. The leader or the medium announces the closure. At the end of the ritual *Lunyáákúsu* the medium says: “Stay with peace, I am flying!” To close the ritual *Kubóónda*, *Zoomba* consults her fellow mediums: “... is it time to leave?” She announces: “We are ready to leave”. Immediately she sings the closing song (IV,28). The ritual closure occurs when there is a communal feeling that the objective has been achieved. The message given by an ancestress (through the woman in a trance) confirms that the goal of the ritual *Kizíku* has been achieved. A joyful dance and a second sharing of a “meal” conclude the ritual.

Two healing rituals related to *Bankíta* (see *Basáwula*’s and *Budyóóngo*’s stories) end with a period for specific instruction regarding *mpoongo*. The candidates are taught how to play their new role as healer. After this they go home.

It emerges from the four healing rituals analysed in this thesis, that almost the same healing actions and symbols are used with the purpose of relieving the patients. The most frequent are massages and taking medicines, as mentioned in section 6.2.3. Each of them is given more than one meaning.

Beyond the physical effect of the massages (to relax painful muscles), the *Mpangu* see in it a means for “capturing” illness and the evil power which causes it. The gestures of massage are significant. They refer to the double aspects of illness, namely the visible manifestation of health troubles and its invisible causes. In the case of massages with hands (*kuzyoodila*), the healer moves his/her hands from the body of the sick person, into the air. This expression means that the pain and its causes are taken out of the patient and are sent away. It is a kind of extracting illness from the patient and sending it elsewhere, into the air. This recalls the expression used by the *Kung* “to pull out the sickness”, which explains the way these people interpret the action of healing, (Katz, 1982 [1993]:35). For the massage with feet (*kudyaatila*), the objective is “crushing”, “squashing” balls, also known as stones which are believed to have been produced by the illness or by an evil doer, inside the patient’s body.

For the *Mpangu*, the massage is a way of creating a personal contact between the healer and the illness or with misfortune itself, because it is necessary to “know” it before treating it. The meaning of similar gestures can change according to each case. The massage applied to *Makyéési* aims at chasing the “snake” from her womb (see *Nyóká-N’káwu*). In the ritual *Kubóónda*, the massage is used as a means for relieving the young mother of the twins from her pain, while for the second pair of baby twins, the goal of massage is to strengthen them, so that they can walk quickly.

6.3. Exploration of Religious Concepts

The nature of the object and the meaning are the two aspects which affect the role played by the ritual actions and symbols. Each action is considered according to its nature which is related to the purpose for which it is used. Beyond the visible aspect of

the action and symbol, one can attach the hidden meaning conveyed in a particular context of the ritual.

We have seen that the forms of the actions for greeting vary. This variation depends on the circumstances, the kind of persons greeted, and those who greet them. The ritual actions such as offering *kúfi* [before and during *kinzoonzi*], sprinkling palm wine in the four directions of the ritual site and singing while turning in circle around the Twins (in *Kubóonda*) etc., represent various forms for greeting. The same actions introduce the participants to the world of the ritual. This aspect can only be understood when enlightened by the communal representation of the universe which is sustained by the basic religious concepts. This section of the analysis focuses on the exploration of several basic religious concepts of the *Mpangu*.

6.3.1. Concept of the Two Worlds

The overall pattern of ritual structure, containing two main segments, relates directly to the *Mpangu* concept of the universe, which is composed of two worlds, one visible, the other invisible. The actions and symbols during the ritual ensure relationships among the members of both these worlds.

Besides the fact that ritual actions of the opening segment are primarily regarded as the preparation for the ritual itself, one can see that the opening segment is addressed to the visible world. The agents and actions affect mostly the visible aspect of the ritual as an event. The actions which take place in *kinzoonzi*, as well as *kusuunsula mbeefo* (to introduce the patient), *kukeembisa bansiimba* (praise to twins), and *mpedozo* (ritual for purification of leaders) involve primarily the visible living community. By contrast, the main segment of the ritual addresses the invisible world. During this period of performance the participants share in the other-worldly relationships with the inhabitants of the invisible world, or at least, the former act under the power of the latter. The experience provided by the healing rituals is a kind of movement which begins in the visible world, moves to the invisible world for resolution of problems, and returns to the visible world.

The concept of the two worlds is reflected in the healing rituals by the constant concern about *bakúlu* and other invisible beings. The leader Antoine – in the ritual *Kizíku* insists on the necessity of involving the members of the two worlds in the ritual: those of *mbáánsa* (city, [land of the visible members]) and those of *n'dúmba* (valley, [land of the departed members]). The phenomena related to the Twins, and *Bankíta* can only be understood in relationship to the concept of the two complementary worlds. The healing actions and symbols in use in the four healing rituals are regarded as means which make possible the connection with the powers of the invisible world. These symbols are *lukóbi* (basket of the ancestors), *n'súúnga* (plait made from vegetation), *n'luúnga* (metallic bracelets).

The change of roles among leaders and mediums, during the progression of the ritual, marks in a way the passage from this world to the other: Antoine is replaced by *Táá Mfúmu* and *Táá Ngáanga*, both religious experts. *Budyóóngo* is replaced by *Zoomba* and her fellow mediums, the Pastor is replaced by the medium. This clearly coincides with the division of ritual structure into opening and main segments. The purposes of the ritual determine the kind of “expert” needed. Each period of performance needs leaders with appropriate skills.

We have seen that the introductory segment is mostly addressed to the visible community, while in the main segment the participants are introduced to the invisible world. Two types of power are needed to achieve the aims of the rituals. The leaders of the main segment are initiated persons for specific service in the community, or those who have been chosen by spiritual entities for the role of mediumship.

According to this observation, the ritual *Kubóónda* should be conducted completely by *Budyóóngo* who has been initiated as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo*. It seems to me that an arrangement has been made between her and *Zoomba*, before the ritual. Nevertheless, the latter often refers to her during the progression of the ritual. At the end, it is clearly *Budyóóngo* who suggests the time for closing the ritual. In this way her role remains pre-eminent.

It can be added that the preference of nighttime for the performance of healing rituals related to *bakúlu*, *bansíimba* and *Bankíta* is significant, for the night is taken for day-time in the invisible world and the time when spiritual entities are active.

It has been stressed (Chapter 1) that the concept of the two worlds profoundly informs the social structure of *Mpangu* clans. It is believed that the members of the invisible world are the founders, owners and guides of the clans. These ancestors provide the clans with prosperity in this life, and welcome their kinsfolk into their villages, after death. To deny the role of the invisible beings – as can happen among the young people of the cities – is a threat of destruction of the clans, and therefore, a risk of disappearance of the *Mpangu* as a cultural group. This is one of great concerns expressed by the elders of the clans.

6.3.2. The Search for *Ngwíísáni* (Harmony)

The quest for *ngwíísáni* or harmony within the visible community, and between it and the spiritual entities of the invisible world is consistently expressed in ritual actions.

The ritual actions presented in section 6.1. introduce the participants to the “ritual world”. When divided people accept to be greeted and greet each other, at the beginning of the ritual *Kiziku*, the gap between the two antagonistic groups diminishes, the resolution of difficulties can be hoped for. Not to greet other people is a refusal, a negation of common kinship between the two sides involved. Without greeting, the search for *ngwíísáni* can become impossible. Through the actions of greeting and sacralisation of the space, the harmony with both the visible and the invisible members is guaranteed.

For an accurate interpretation of rituals, it is helpful to distinguish between those who greet and those who are greeted, because the form of greeting relates to the status of the person involved. The two spokesmen, in the ritual *Kiziku*, greet each other with *kúfi*.

Through this gesture they introduce each other as *nzoonzi* (spokesman, orator) before the assembly. They are then recognised and confirmed in their position as heads of a section in the clan [for the time being]. From then on they feel comfortable to search for *ngwíísáni* in the interest of the entire community.

Certain symbolic expressions of *ngwíísáni* can be seen in the communal interpretation of the objects used in the ritual performance. *Lukóbi* (basket of the ancestors), *nsáámbe* (palm wine), *káásu* (kola nut), *mpéémbe* (white clay), *mása* (water), *N'fúki* (wild animal), *Nkáka* (pangolin), *Kóónso* (one of the four days of the koongo traditional week) and so forth, constitute the main symbolic expressions in use by the ritualists in *Mpangu* society. All these symbols are related to the ancestors.

Lukóbi is regarded as the dwelling of *bakúlu* in the clan and deserves to be respected and honoured by all the members. The palm wine and kola nut represent “drink” and “food” offered to the ancestors, but also the courtesy in welcoming important guests. Water is considered by the *Mpangu* as the “pure” object which has never been caught by diviners. The two wild animals *N'fúki* and *Nkáka* are often connected to the ancestors' power, but the reasons are not clear to me. Their skin is used as royal insignia. Finally, the day *Kóónso* recalls the important event of installation of the chief in many clans, which occurs on this day of the week.

Given that a symbol is connected with the spiritual life of the people who use it, the meaning attributed to these objects reveals *Mpangu* spirituality. The symbolic expression for *ngwíísani* responds to a need and involves, in a way, the force of nature. My purpose here is to explore how the symbolic objects are related to the theme *ngwíísani*.

Lukóbi is at the heart of life in the clan. It embodies the unity of all the members in the clan. It accompanies them when they move. Divisions and hate noticed among the members of the clan, at the beginning of the ritual *Kizíku*, is evidence of lack of *ngwíísani*, because *lukóbi* is absent. The return of it within the clan restores the harmony.

A symbol stands for a hidden reality which cannot be reached without using a visible object. The symbolic function of *lukóbi* lies mainly in its content – which establishes a link with the most remote ancestor of the clan represented by the remains and other symbolic objects as described in Chapter 2 of this thesis (see: Note 1; also Van Wing, 1959:318).

From the four healing rituals it emerges that the harmony sought is extended to the universe as a whole. Actually, the symbolic objects mentioned above are related to the animal domain, to the division of time, and to material nature. This is a communal search for harmony as expressed by the sharing of “food” and “drink” whether concrete or symbolic. The sharing of a meal is a sign of good relationships and kinship among the members of the clan, a sign of belonging to the same group and so a sign of *ngwíísáni*. A ritual meal such as described in *kinzoonzi ki máfwa* (a meeting regarding a dead relative, -see Appendix: 4th type of *kinzoonzi*) underscores how the *Mpangu* are constantly concerned with the maintenance of good relationships which produce *ngwíísáni*. Beyond the sharing of a meal everyone creates and reinforces the link of belonging to the group to the extent that we can equate not sharing this meal with not belonging to the group.

After sharing the meal, the participants feel strengthened, not by the quantity of food eaten, but by the satisfaction of celebrating their kinship as the members of the clan. This is symbolised by sharing the meat of **one** goat, in terms of covenant and healing; and the flesh of **one** chicken, for thanksgiving. The participants feel relieved of a duty. The shared ritual and “last” meal described by Malidoma P. Somé (1991:51-52) emphasizes this aspect of harmony among the Dagari of Burkina Faso.

At the beginning of the ritual *Kubóonda*, the Twins are offered *nsáamba* and *káásu*, that is to say that they are asked to be in good relationship with the participants during the ritual. The *Mpangu* use the same symbolism in the everyday life when they welcome their guests. To offer a drink and *káásu* (kola nut) means to establish *ngwíísáni* with them or, at least to express a wish for it.

The rules of E.C.U.S.E. forbid the use of symbolic objects, except *mása* (water), as explained by the Pastor. *Masa mánswa* (fresh water) contrasts with impurity caused by

illness and misfortune. However, there is no emphasis on water during the process of this ritual. In two of the directed prayers (Pastor's and Kyooni's) water is mentioned for a comparison: "We are soaked in our sins as in the water".

Water is also believed to be a source of "esoteric" power. *Bankíta* and *bisúmbi* are also called *bési mása* (citizens of the water) dwelling beneath the water.

The absence of symbolic objects in this Church reflects the dominant belief that only God heals through the Holy Spirit. It has been stressed from the beginning of the ritual that the Spirit of God is the only one who accomplishes everything. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to obey His directives.

Self protection is one of the aspects of *ngwílsáni*. The symbolic offerings made to the invisible powers aim at both satisfying these spirits and protecting oneself. This is the basic concept of the rituals related to the Twins, *bakúlu* and *Bankíta*. The introductory ritual actions guarantee the protection of self.

6.3.3. The Concept of Communication

According to *Mpangu* thought, communication is at the heart of the healing rituals. This is the condition for reaching the targeted goal. Given that the participants include inhabitants of the invisible world and those of the visible one, an important part of responsibility is attributed to the "living-dead" to use Mbiti's term (1970). This responsibility is carried out with collaboration of the visible community, especially during the ritual process. In a way, the invisible members are always wisely invited to collaborate in a healing action, as E. de Rosny observed following his *lived experience of healing rituals in Douala (1981:280)*.

For the *Mpangu*, a healer must communicate with the invisible beings from whom he receives knowledge and guidance for healing. This communication can be interpreted in different ways, e.g. obedience to the ancestors' will, since the healer is accountable to them. "I am doing *kudyaatila*, according to your will", says *Tád Mfumu* to his ancestors, while he treats *Makyéési*. On ^{the} one hand, this attitude facilitates assistance and collaboration between the healer and his/her ancestors. On the other hand, it helps

the patient to feel himself/herself under influence of the ancestors and other invisible powers.

Actions and symbols at the beginning of each healing ritual are marked by the search for communication with the other members. Obviously, the participants consider the communication as the basis for receiving assistance from the invisible powers. It is evident that the objective aimed at in the ritual *mpedozo* is to facilitate the communication with the Spirit of God, the helper. The Pastor refers to it when he inquires whether anyone [among *bisyeelo*] has received *any inspiration to be shared with others*.

In Christian thinking, this can be interpreted as the state of grace in which a person is connected with God who is source of all the good that can be desired. For the E.C.U.S.E., the communication with the Holy Spirit is the fundamental principle of the teaching. In his comments, the Pastor insists on the fact that the good Pastor is the one who “listens” to the Holy Spirit instead of relying on higher education.

This concept is illustrated by a great acceptability which characterises this Church. Easily, the assembly welcomes the message conveyed by anyone who presents himself/herself as being under the special power of the Holy Spirit. The example of the young woman – sitting in the courtyard all morning and praying out loud – illustrates this characteristic. Her advice is accepted as received from the Holy Spirit. People’s understanding is that God speaks freely to anyone for the benefit of the community.

In some rare cases, the healer seeks to communicate with the “evil” which has caused the illness or misfortune. The reason is to fight and chase it from the sick person, as it happens in the ritual of *Nyóká-N’káwu*: “You snake, I summon you to come out; leave this girl”. After wishing *Makyéési* prosperity, the healer turns again to his ancestors asking them for help, for a complete healing: “Help her during the night, help her during the day”. Obviously, healing is the ultimate goal sought by the healer and other participants of the four healing rituals. However, the healer permanently

occupies the second rank, the invisible powers are given the first place. Healer and patient trust in them.

Communication with the invisible beings must be regarded as an important aspect of *Mpangu* spirituality which can be defined as being focused on communal needs (Bockie, 1993:ch.1). Discussing African spirituality, Bishop P. Kalilombe (1995:17) wrote that "African spirituality is based on the spirit of community, on co-operation, and on sharing and distribution". This community is conceived in terms of "family", that is, in terms of kinship and affinity relationships which determine the duties of the participants.

During the performance of the healing rituals, actions and symbols serve for expressing various aspects of communication. Intentionally, the ritual *Kiziku* was held at *Makáánga*, a village considered as the birth-site of the clan, the place where the ancestors were buried. The fact of going back to this village is itself an expression of a great need for communication with the ancestors in this special circumstance of a ritual. For the same reason, the ritual *Kutoombula Bankita*, reported by *Basáwula*, must be held at *Kináánga*. The two sites are related to the invisible beings and play an important role in communication during the ritual.

The number of actions and symbols mentioned in section 6.2. can be considered as expressions of communication with the other world. The trance and the fact of being inhabited by spirits represent the form par excellence of communication. This is the way the ancestors react to the calls and invocations expressed by the assembly. The medium in this state seems to know more than other participants, as he/she reveals things unknown to the others. This is evidence that the medium has been in communication with the powers of the other world.

6.3.4. **Assuaging the Spiritual Causes of Human Suffering**

It seems artificial to distinguish separate healing actions in a ritual because all hold together and blend as elements of one process. For the *Mpangu*, illness as well as healing involves the entire person, that is, the body itself, the spiritual, and the social

aspects. Consequently, the healing action must be holistic and include all of these aspects of life.

The effort for assuaging the spiritual causes of human suffering reveals an aspect of the search for the harmonious life. The *Mpangu* have recourse to the spiritual entities because of the beliefs that these spirits are not only the owners of the clans, but also they take care of all the aspects of life in the community. Therefore, it is expected that the suffering and misfortune should be assuaged or destroyed by their power. The prayers, invocations and other ritual actions and symbols are employed with this purpose.

Freeing the patients from their pain is the main objective of healing actions and symbols. The gestures are reinforced by verbal expressions (discussed in next chapter), and affect the entire being of the patients and relieve them from their suffering.

CHAPTER 7

VERBAL EXPRESSIONS OF MPANGU RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Verbal expressions which occur in the healing rituals are almost invariably formalised; they are socially recognisable codes of speech. The main forms of verbal expressions employed in the healing rituals are *n'keenda* (narratives), *bingána* (proverbs), *mbóóka* (calls, invocations), *kubikula* (revelations), *bimbúmbi* (a special style of dialogue), and *n'kúúnga* (song-texts). These forms are not used exclusively only in healing rituals, but when they are they serve to structure the rituals and assist the participants in knowing how to behave and participate in them.

The analysis which follows of the main forms of verbal expressions falls under two headings: *Kutá kinzoonzi* (performing the art of public speaking) and *Kingaanga* (expertise and knowledge which characterise the specific discourse restricted to the persons who have been initiated for special functions in the society). The two headings represent two types of traditional forms of discourse among *Bakóongo*, (see Janzen and MacGaffey, 1974:5,8).

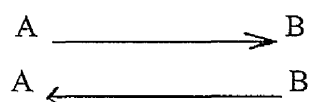
These two categories of speech clearly parallel the basic structuring of the rituals into opening or preparatory and main segments, represented in the four diagrams, as discussed in Chapter 6. *Kutá kinzoonzi* (performing the art of public speaking) occurs during the opening segment which enables the participants to prepare themselves to perform the ritual together. *Kingaanga* (expert knowledge) is expressed in the main segment of the ritual. It refers to the appropriate verbal forms uttered by the expert according to his/her status and the healing action in process. The analysis which follows demonstrates that ritual actions and verbal expressions represent two complementary modes of expressing religious thought. Likewise, the meaning of the concept can be affected by the form of expression through which it is expressed.

Verbal expressions and ritual actions are linked by an internal logic which directs them towards the final purpose of the healing ritual. Each form of verbal expression fulfils a

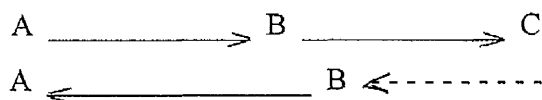
specific function according to when and where it occurs during the ritual process. It contributes also to the entire development of the ritual as a whole. The words, actions and symbols employed for greetings play the role of putting the participants into relation with each other, so that the ritual can begin. We have examined the specific function attributed to the narratives [introducing the problem], to the dialogue [explanation, checking for understanding], to the proverbs [summarising the issue], songs and *bimbĩmbi* [inviting the participants to speak as one voice], etc.. All these forms of expression contribute to the purpose aimed at by the healing rituals to which they belong.

To fulfil its purpose, each ritual employs some form of mediumship. To interpret the meaning of the verbal expressions employed by the mediums it is interesting to note who speaks to whom and who replies. The dialogue between the assembly/patient and the medium can go through several levels.

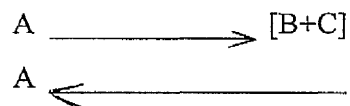
On the visible level, the patients or their relatives (A) address the expert (B) requiring information and advice regarding the illness or misfortune, and the expert answers them. Questions and answers can continue in this fashion, following the pattern.



The second kind of dialogue includes the invisible beings to whom the expert turns for assistance. The participants/patients (A) address the expert (B) about their concerns. In turn, he/she addresses the spiritual entities (C), whose answers are transmitted to the assembly through the expert as follows:



The third level occurs in the circumstances of *kutuuntuka* (trance). The spiritual entities [C] become “present” and speak directly to the assembly (A) through the medium (B) whose body they “possess”.



The three levels of dialogue are related to the basic traditional forms of discourse among the *Kóongo-Mpangu* as mentioned above. The first level parallels *kinzoonzi* which facilitates discussion among the members of the visible world. There is a kind of exchange of ideas and opinions between the orator and the assembly. The second and third levels of dialogue involve the invisible world when the spiritual entities intervene in the dialogue. At this level, *kingaanga* is the suitable form of discourse required in the ritual dialogue.

Each form of dialogue which is described above requires suitable forms of verbal expression related to it. For example, the invocations and incantations occur only after the encounter between the visible and the invisible beings, when communication between the two worlds takes place. This occurs during *kingaanga* discourse.

7.1. *Kutá kinzoonzi* (Performing the Art of Public Speaking) (Verbal expressions in the opening ritual segment)

Considered as an art of public speaking, *kinzoonzi* obeys appropriate norms which I do not intend to discuss here. The ability to use each of the forms of expression discussed here is one of the basic skills expected of a good orator among the *Bakóongo-Mpangu*. *Kinzoonzi* combines various types of verbal expressions which I intend to explore in the following sections. Each type is defined according to the genre, the context of occurrence and the role played as a form of expression in the healing rituals.

7.1.1. *N'keenda* (Narratives)

N'keenda can be defined as a story, a narrative, or an account of events and experiences. In *Kóongo-Mpangu* oral expression, the term *n'keenda* indicates a fable, a story, an oral report, but also the fact of gossiping, and it occurs often in *kinzoonzi* as well as for the amusement of the children.

In the context of healing rituals, *n'keenda* is used to introduce a problem in an indirect manner. At the beginning of *Kiziku*, Antoine says: "*Bayáya, n'keenda itá nteti*" (Brothers/sisters, I would like to tell [you] first a story). He refers to the fable in which an animal *Ngó* (the leopard) and a bird *Zóngesi* (red-bird) are the main characters. This is also an allegory which symbolically describes the real situation of the members of the clan *Ntúúmba*. The story presents its message in an amusing manner, but beyond this, the story of "*Mbáánsá Ngwílsáni*" (the City of Harmony) "speaks" to the participants of the necessity to restore unity in the clan. It entertains while focusing on the problem at hand. The pleasant aspect of the story emerges from the fact that the main characters are well known to the participants, as well as the contrast between them, the unlikelyhood of the story itself and the personal skill of the storyteller. The painful feeling of the problem which has divided the clan is undermined by the pleasant aspect of the story. The narrative makes the participants more disposed to welcome the message which the orator wants to transmit.

At this stage of the ritual, the participants are already involved in the search for *ngwílsáni* (harmony) as they listen to the same story told by a member of the clan. Subconsciously, they communicate among themselves as they accept the message conveyed through the story. The narrative helps the participants to forget – at least momentarily – their divisions.

The narrative employed by *Zoomba* (in *Kubóonda*) is related to the life of the second pair of baby Twins before their birth. This can also be interpreted as *kubikula* (revelation). However, the narrative introduces the problem existing between the two babies, it explains the causes which delay the baby Twins from walking. This narrative

shows that the harmony between the two children has been broken. The “money” borrowed represents an unexplained problem which opposes the two baby Twins. Therefore, the parents and relatives have the duty to restore harmony by paying back the “money”.

This story fits in very well with the ritual *Kubóónda* which aimed at healing the young mother of the Twins, because the cause of her swollen knees was interpreted, in a way, as a sign of disorder in relationships with the invisible world. It seems clearly that the story reinforces the concept of the Twins as the mysterious children. Further, the story introduces the conflict between the two children which began in the invisible world and continues in the visible world. This (well) illustrates the concept of the two worlds between which communication is ensured by the rituals.

7.1.2. *Bingána* (Proverbs)

Commonly, a proverb can be defined as a short sentence which gives advice or tells something related to different areas of human life. The relation between the proverb and the fable is that the former is considered as the summary of the latter. The context of *kinzoonzi* of all kinds is the best opportunity for the use of *bingána* for the *Mpangu*. The knowledge and ability to use *bingána* is a sign of wisdom. They say: “*Ta ngána, baangula ngána*”, that is, anyone who employs a proverb must be capable of explaining the meaning, (see also Janzen and MacGaffey, 1974:9).

The proverbs employed throughout the four healing rituals, illustrate the excellent ways of expressing thoughts such as:

- Attributing responsibilities:

“*Yu ubééla kivumu, yu unwáánínáánga kyeelo*”

(Anyone who suffers from diarrhoea must run towards the door), (section 2.2.1. of *Kiziku*). By this proverb Antoine wanted to tell Pierre that he and his people were those who most needed the healing ritual because they were victims of misfortunes.

- Wishing for fertility:

"Kala n'singa mí nkasa" (Be [like] the lianas of the bean plant), (*Nyóká-N'káwu*, especially the note 18 of Chapter 3). According to the *Mpangu*, the fertility of all plants with lianas depends on how deep the lianas entangle with each other. The more they are entangled, the more productive they are expected to be. Thus, this wish is addressed to *Makyéési*: may she enjoy great fertility and have many children.

- A statement for recognition of the ancestors, according to the *Mpangu*:

"Nsí n'kúlu, muuntu n'kúlu" (Each country [has] ancestors, each person [must have] ancestors) says *Budyóóngo* when introducing herself before telling her story of *Kuyáála Nkita*, Chapter 3, section 3.2.).

- Expression for asking forgiveness, as it is sung at the end of the ritual *Kubóónda*: *Ntolokele kinkoombo* (I bow down as goats do), (Song IV,28). The participants in the ritual *Kubóónda* – especially the relatives – presume that something might be wrong in their relationships with the Twins, even during the ritual. At the end of it they ask for forgiveness in order to make sure that the harmony restored will last. This expression is similar to a proverb.

- An enigmatic response to an embarrassing question:

Dyóókó dísiisa ban'kwá weela, ... (Cassava carrot which is left behind by hunters, ... (*E.C.U.S.E.* 5.3.4., 2nd Case).

During the performance of the ritual, this proverb was used as an answer to a mother who wanted to know why her children were so often ill and had bad luck. . Actually, the question seems embarrassing as it focuses on the invisible nature of the causes of illnesses and misfortune. The answer required a kind of implicit revelation. The woman interprets it according to her kinship relationships within her clan. The message of this proverb is that these children [and their mother] are left for their own sake, no one in the clan cares to protect them from the attacks. Any evil feels free to do harm.

Each of these proverbs is adapted to the kind of the message the user wants to deliver according to the circumstance in which it is used. In each case, the proverbs encapsulate the essential meaning of the message which needs to be “discovered” and interpreted rather than merely listened to.

7.1.3. *Bimbúmbi* (Special style of dialogue)

One form of the speech often employed is the technique of elicited response: the speaker pronounces the first part of a sentence, and the assembly replies with the second part. In this way everyone is involved in the discussion.

By the technique of elicited response, the orator (in *Kiziku*) invites the participants to listen to his story, to reflect on it and to establish any parallel with the concrete situation lived by the members of the clan. In spite of the absence of *kinzoonzi* in the other rituals, the technique of *bimbúmbi* (special style of dialogue) is continually employed as a tool to include everyone in the discussion. The identification of the main aim of the gathering is reached after a dialogue made of a series of questions-response conducted by the orator. The purpose is to clarify the situation and to explain the main problem.

Bimbúmbi are represented by short elements of speech – [a word or a part of a word, a part of the sentence] – which ^{are} uttered as an answer by the assembly, to complete the first part pronounced by the orator/leader. The examples below are taken from the dialogue between Antoine and the assembly, during *kinzoonzi* which prepares *Kiziku*. To begin his speech, he said:

Antoine: *Bayááya!*

Assembly: *Eh! (Yes)*

To conclude each of the ideas he introduced to the assembly, he used some verbal forms such as:

Antoine: *Keti ka bwáá ko* (Is it not true)?

Assembly: *Í búúna* (It is so).

Antoine: Do you agree with this?

Assembly: We do.

In the ritual *Kubóonda*, the forms of *bimbúmbi* used in the dialogue between *Zoomba* and the assembly are invariably formalised; they are part of the “ritual language”. For example:

Zoomba: I did this. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

Zoomba: [Answering a question]: Whether us or not, it does not matter. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka*

We have seen the way *bimbúmbi* are employed; they embellish the speech and enable the assembly to be active. When considered as a form of verbal expression, the precise ritual segment in which *bimbúmbi* occur determines the nature of the message conveyed. The opening segment of the ritual process aims at pulling the participants together so that they can celebrate as “one”. *Bimbúmbi* employed in this section serve to check the communal understanding of the main issue of the gathering and getting the approval of the assembly:

Orator: *Keti ka bwáá ko* (Is it not true)?

Assembly: *Í búúna* (It is)!

In *Kukeembisa Bansiimba* (Praise of the Twins) a single sentence is used to indicate the end of each song:

Leader: *Wéédi e* ([the song] is over)!

Assembly: *E e* (Yes)!

During the main segment of the ritual, the form of *bimbúmbi* (in *Kiziku* and *Kubóonda*) becomes invariable, it is introduced by the medium (see Ch.2, notes 12 and 13):

Medium: *Ndúúndu!*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka!*

These expressions introduce and end each discourse addressed to spiritual entities pronounced during the ritual process. They facilitate the communication with the spiritual entities and keep the assembly active.

On the contrary, the form of *bimbúmbi* employed during *mpedozo* (in E.C.U.S.E.) does not change when moving into the main segment of the ritual:

Pastor: *Yééngé va n'toto!* (Peace on earth)!

Assembly: *Yééngé mu zulu!* (Peace in heaven)!

Pastor: *Yééngé mu zulu!* (Peace in heaven)!

Assembly: *Yééngé va n'toto!* (Peace on earth)!

Pastor: *Yééngé!* (Peace)!

Assembly: *Yééngé!* (Peace)!

These forms introduce and conclude the prayers, songs, teaching and so forth. They indicate the transition from one ritual stage to another. The repetition of the same thought expressed emphasises the ultimate purpose of the ritual, namely, harmony, which is interpreted as peace with all the powers on the earth and in heaven.

7.2. *Kingaanga* (Expert Knowledge)

(Verbal Expressions in the Main Ritual Segment)

Kingaanga is the second type of the traditional form of discourse among *Bakóongo*, as we have seen above. The two terms, *kingaanga* and *ngaanga* (expert, technician, healer, etc.) are linked. The latter indicates a person who has been initiated into the knowledge and procedure of specific rituals. *Kingaanga* is then defined as the expertise which determines the appropriate skills required for such a religious function.

In the context of healing rituals, the term *kingaanga* primarily indicates a kind of special speech uttered, at a given moment, by the expert, with the purpose of empowering the healing actions and facilitating communication between the medium or the expert and the spiritual entities.

Kingaanga is considered as a special form of language related to the healing rituals. It is composed of spoken forms of expression, the sacred words which can only be uttered by the expert or healer at a given moment of the ritual process. These forms are distinguished from ordinary language in that they must only be employed in the context of the rituals. To use them outside this context is considered by the *Mpangu* as a possible cause of misfortune which can befall individuals and their clans.

This concept can explain the behaviour of some informants I noticed during the research in the field. They offered first *nsáám̃ba* (palm wine) and *káásu* (kola nut) to the spiritual entities before accepting to answer my questions. This practice is considered as *kuzibula nzila* (to open the way), that is, to ask for the permission of the spiritual entities so that the matters related to *kingaanga* discourse can be spoken of outside their usual context. This “offering” locates the discourse in a kind of ritual context, so that the eventuality of misfortune is avoided. This happened, as said above, when *Buyóóngo* prepared herself before reporting on “*Kuyáála Nkita!* (Section 3.2.).

Kingaanga discourse related to the four healing rituals described in this thesis, includes *kusíba* (to voice warnings and utter incantations), *mbóóka* (calls, invocations) and *lusaambu* (prayers) addressed to the spiritual entities. This constitutes a series of verbal expressions which contains the religious thoughts of the participants.

Kingaanga-speech is primarily characterised by the use of esoteric and mysterious terms and expressions which make the meaning obscure and often cannot be translated into English. The examples below are taken from the healing process of *Nyóká-N'káwu* (see Section 3.4.2.). (Dots in parentheses indicate the expressions which are not translated into English). While *Makyéési*, the patient, is drinking the solution of medicines, the healer says:

“Kalééka wóó kasikama ntaangu n’lúúngu

Nsáánsí luketi-keengi

(.....)

Ku nsuká zaandu téká bátéka

(On one side of the market things are sold)

Ku nsuká zaandu fúúntá kúfúúnta

(On one [the other] side things are unsold)

Mavwédi-vwedi”

(.....)

Before ending the healing process, the healer pours out the solution on the patient’s head, then asks her to continue pouring the solution on her head while he says:

“Léémbí dí mpati, léémbí dí ngaanga

(.....).

Nsí n’kúlu

(Each country [has] ancestor(s))

Muuntu n’kúlu

(Each person [has] ancestor(s))

Nsiinsa n’kánu

(To provoke [someone] is punishable)

Mbeedí n’kánu

([To use] a knife is punishable)

Tun’leembedí kimpátí, tun’leembedí kingaanga

Kaleeka wóó, kasikama ntáángú n’lúúngu

(May she sleep soundly until the next morning)

Mavwédi-vwedi

(.....)

Muna nzílá yé nzíla

(May everything end successfully)

Swáá!

(.....)

The speech is concluded in a dialogue style using *bimbímbi* which are repeated three times by the healer and the patient:

Healer: **Kipú yaa!** (.....)

Patient: *Kituuka!* (It has gone)

Words and actions complement one another during the healing process, and these *kingaanga* formulae guarantee the efficacy of the healing actions. The fact that *kingaanga* is an esoteric form of speech reinforces its unusual and mysterious aura and reinforces the feeling of moving from the visible to the invisible world.

In *E.C.U.S.E.*, the medium pronounces a series of incomprehensible sounds which might be likened to *kingaanga*-speech. While patting the stomach of the patient, she pours out water on it and massages it, saying:

“Eso permeable clair tu senser

Esto sis ifo risposis

Iresto permeable clair, irresponseriable”.

7.2.1. *Kusiba* (To voice warnings and utter incantations)

The term *kusiba* indicates both the ritual action and the discourse pronounced by the expert/healer before an important ritual action such as the personal commitment of the participants to fulfil certain duties under oath, or a covenant established between the individuals and the spiritual entities. *Kusiba* discourse is addressed to the participants in the ritual as well as the spiritual entities. It is employed in two ways during the healing process: to discover the source of illness or misfortune and to voice warning, (see also Van Wing, 1959:348-355).

The concept of *kusiba* can be interpreted in different ways, therefore, it cannot be translated in one word. The examples below illustrate the variety and nuances of the meanings. The incantations pronounced during the healing ritual *Nyóká-N'káwu* contain more than one meaning, and can be divided into four sections. The first and second occur during *kudyaatila* (massage with feet), the third during *kunwíika* (taking the medicines) and the fourth for closing the healing session. The healer begins with identifying the cause of the illness. The two lineages to which the patient belongs are suspected as possible sources of illness. Likewise the relationships with other members of the society – friend or enemy – are suspected:

“Look! Regarding the snake:

Anyone who put it in the body of this girl,

Be it from *kitááta* (patrilineage), from *kimááma* (matrilineage), from a friend or from an enemy ...”

By addressing the snake, the healer aims at catching the spirit to whom the cause of the illness can be attributed. It is necessary to establish personal contact with the “evil” which has caused the illness or misfortune to enable the healer to fight against it. A warning is the first stage of this struggle. The healer continues:

“Truly, you, snake, I summon you to come out [of this body]

Leave this girl alone.”

He expressed his good wishes for the patient and blesses her:

“[My wish is] that this girl will be able to give birth, to rear [children], to pierce a lion, to pierce a leopard (that is, may she be strong). [Be like] the lianas of the bean plant.”

The healer speaks of his methods of performing the healing process. The speech is addressed to the ancestors from whom the healer receives his knowledge for the healing service, and to whom he is accountable. The methods include communication between

inhabitants of the invisible world referred to with the term – *ku mása* – and those of the visible world referred to as – *kú nseki*. The recourse to the ancestors means more than a mere call for assistance; it shows that the healer entrusts the patient to his ancestors for the complete healing. He says: “help her during the night, help her during the day”, that is, to protect the patient from evil attacks originating from the invisible world as well as from the visible world. He says:

“I, I am doing *kudyaatila*
I do it from *kú nseki* (the land of the living)
I do it from *ku mása* (the land of the dead)
May she sleep soundly until the next morning
You, *Bankááka* (elders/ancestors), could you help this girl!
Help her during the night
Help her during the day
May she give birth to girls and boys.”

Again, the concern of discovering the cause of the illness occurs:

“We do not know where this snake comes from
If it comes from *Mfúmú Nzáámbi* (Lord God) we accept the fact.
But if it comes from *bandoki* (sorcerers),
We ask you, *Táátá Nzáámbi* (Father God) to cast it out by your power, since the girl has been suffering for a long time.”

The second part of the incantations is related to the expertise of healing itself. The healer explains what he is doing and why he is doing it in such a way:

“I am doing *kudyaatila* according to your will
You, [*Bankááka*] told me:
“*Dyaata nitu yaákulu*” (Walk on all the body) so that it becomes light,
Walk on the stomach, so that the snake will go out.
May she sleep soundly until the next morning

Each country [has] ancestor(s)

Each person [has] ancestor(s)

I, I was invested with power by [my] *Bankááka*, not by myself

He, the Lord God, has chosen me for this work.”

The third part accompanies the process *kunwíika* (taking the medicines). The healer introduces first the main symbolic object used, *kódi* (shell of a snail) which establishes the link with the ancestors:

“This *kódi* is inherited from *Bambúta* (elders/ancestors).

It belonged to *Nkááká Nkyeesa*, the foundress of the clan.

She left it and said: “This *kódi* is for providing births”.

This is *kódí dí mbóóngó múúntu* (the shell for progeny).”

The healer repeats his good wishes for *Makyéési*, the patient:

“May this girl, since she has drunk it [*kódi*], give birth to girls, and give birth to boys.”

The following section of sentences represents the typical form of *kusíba*. This is at the heart of the discourse. The healer summarises his essential concerns and wishes. He also introduces the healing action *kunwíika*. While *Makyéési* drinks for the first time, the healer says:

“Truly, truly ... now this young girl is drinking from *kódi* ...

Anyone who put this snake in her, be he/she from *kítááta* (patrilineage), from *kimááma* (matrilineage), *kinkááka* (grandparents’ lineage), an enemy, whoever ...

[Behold], thanks to this *kódi* the progeny will be born from this young girl when she gets married.

This *kódi* will chase out the snake which causes her trouble.

May this girl sleep soundly until the next morning!”

When the patient is drinking for the second time the healer says:

“May she sleep soundly until the next morning!

“Each country [has] ancestor(s)

Each person [has] ancestor(s)

To provoke [someone] is punishable

[To use] a knife is punishable

One should not gaze at albino

Mfwáángá zí Nkita

(.....)

Ndúúndu ye Mbaka

(.....)

Drink from *kódi*, drink honourable.”

And the third and last time of drinking the medicine solution:

“May she sleep soundly until the next morning!

Nsáánsí lúkétí-kééngi

(.....)

On one side of the market things are sold

On one [the other] side of the market things are unsold

Mavwédi-vwedi

(.....)

[What we want is] human progeny.”

The fourth part of the speech is a closing section. The healer seems to be giving an account to the ancestors regarding his procedure of healing:

Léémbí dí mpati, léémbí dí ngáánga

(.....)

Each country [has] ancestor(s)

Each person [has] ancestor(s)
To provoke [someone] is punishable
[To use] a knife is punishable

Léémbí-leembi

(.....)

Tun'leembedí mpati, tun'leembedí ngaanga

(.....)

May she sleep soundly until the next morning

Mavwédí-vwedi

May everything end successfully

Swáá!"

(.....)

The ritual is closed in the formal form of dialogue using *bimbímbi*:

Healer: ***Kipú yaa!*** ... (...)

Patient: ***Kítuuka!*** (It has gone)

The examples quoted above show how the terms used in *kusíba*-speech express the basic concepts of communication with the invisible powers of the clan [the ancestors] and those representing the evil [snake and its possible causes]. This communication aims at fighting against the latter whereas the ancestors are expected to heal *Makyéési* in terms of restoring a harmonious life. The frequent recourse to the spiritual entities is an evidence of how the life of individuals is deeply affected by the principle of the two worlds.

Kusíba-speech uttered by Antoine in the ritual *Kizíku* aims at voicing a warning (see the section *Kaangu ye kúbuka*: covenant and healing process). He combines the singing (Song II,12) and speech to admonish the participants before their commitment to do the will of the ancestors:

É ngwa ntaangu maambu yifwééni e!

(It is time for acting)

E lukebá, yi ntaangu yifwééni e!

(Be careful, it is time for acting)

He dances, and while the assembly continues singing, he pronounces warnings that if anyone is not ready to take the commitment seriously, it is better not to continue the ritual, because punishments will follow every single neglect and transgression of the will of the ancestors. The combination of actions [dance and singing] and the words strengthens the warning and compels everyone to take the commitment seriously in order to avoid punishment from the ancestors.

Usually, the incantations of this kind aim rather at creating a fearful feeling of transgression than specifying the kind of possible punishment. The vague style lets everyone imagine the form of misfortune which can result from transgressions of the ancestors' will. The claim made by the woman with a sore in the neck, that she prayed to the ancestors to forgive her if she had offended them, illustrates this uncertainty.

Another kind of *kusiba* is interpreted as a mere statement when *Budyóóngo* speaks according to her religious status as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo*. She introduces the ritual *Kubóónda* (4.1.2.) saying:

Beeto ka batulokáá ko

(We, we cannot be bewitched)

Beeto ka tukweendaanga ku n'kísi ko

(We, we cannot have recourse to *n'kísi*)

Beeto ka tukweendaanga kú zimpúúngú ko

(We, we cannot have recourse to *zimpúúngu*)

Beeto ka tukweendaanga kú bítékí ko

(We, we cannot have recourse to the statuettes of witches)

She uses the pronoun "*beeto*" (we) which associates her with the Twins who are considered as citizens of the invisible world. Everyone in the assembly understands

that she is not speaking as mother *Budyóóngo* but as mother *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo*, that is, the one chosen and entrusted, through initiation, for the service of *Bankíta*. Her association with the Twins is evidence of the *Mpangu* concept that *bakúlu* (ancestors), *Bankíta* (special category of spirits of the ancestors) and *bansíimba* (the Twins) are closely linked.

This association with three categories of spiritual entities can be understood in terms of representation. During the ritual *Kubóónda*, mother *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* represents *bakúlu* by whom she has been chosen. She has been initiated and entrusted with the service of *Bankíta* and therefore, is the senior of mothers of the Twins. On their side, the Twins are considered as a special gift from *bakúlu* to the clans, and so they are related to them and to *Bankíta*.

These relationships seem to ^{override} the principle of the clan. *Budyóóngo* and the baby-twins do not belong to the same clan, thus, they do not have the same ancestors. By her status as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* she transcends these limits and can be associated with the ancestors of the clans which she serves during the ritual. This is a reason why she is invited by any family or clan to perform the ritual *Kubóónda* and others related to the Twins. Her *kusíba*-speech cannot be pronounced by another person in the assembly because it is inherent in her status.

It seems clear that *kusíba* is more than voicing warnings. It differs from invocations which focus on calls to attract the attention of *bakúlu* so that they respond, in some way, to the participants.

7.2.2. *Mbóóka* and *Lusáámbu* (Calls, Invocations and Prayers)

The important meaning of *mbóóka* and *lusáámbu* in the healing ritual is to call upon the spiritual entities to join the assembly, so that the participants can communicate with them. The calls, invocations and prayers serve this purpose.

Invocational calls and prayers are indiscriminately used as forms for addressing the spiritual entities. In the four healing rituals described, the invocations and prayers are recited as well as sung. Two of the three prayers conducted by *bisyeelo* (leaders), in *E.C.U.S.E.* focus on the gift of life and the community. Both prayers, *Kyóóni*'s and Evarist's begin with the acknowledgement that God is the Creator of all things and Giver of life. He is the God to whom the ancestors, *Kimbángu* and *Góónda* pray, the God of Black People. The thanksgiving to God for His daily protection and the intercession for the Community (the Church of *Mpeeve ya N'loongo*) characterise these prayers.

The third prayer, the Psalm 100 of David, underlines the link between the present community of *E.C.U.S.E.* and that of the Old Testament, the two communities address the same God. This prayer is an expression of the feeling of belonging to a large group of faithful through the ages. It reinforces the value of community.

One can see that the entire ritual *Kubóonda* is a series of invocations and prayers recited and sung. From Song-text IV,9 through which the calls are addressed to the spirits of the Twins, to Song-text IV,28 which expresses the demand for forgiveness, the ritual hints at the expectations of the participants. These songs praise the Twins in order to re-establish harmony which is necessary for success in the search for healing.

The Song-text II,14, for example, encapsulates the invocations and prayers expressed during the ritual *Kizíku*. This is a detailed and sung description of the hard condition of life within which the members of the clan live. The participants call upon the spiritual entities, represented by *Máá N'tóómbo* and *Yáá Nsáángu* (verse 3), asking for assistance because they are suffering. They explain their grievances symbolised by the terms "*manzála ga laká*" (strangled), and ask for healing.

The symbolic name *Máá N'tóómbo* and the verb *toombuka* (come out) frequently used in the text recall the basic principle of the two worlds which affects individuals and the community. Several verbs are employed to indicate the expectation of the assembly:

wisi kúntala (come to visit me), (chorus, verses 5 and 6)

wisi kúmbuka (come to heal me), (verse 4)

wisi kúmbaka (come to take me), (verses 6,10,11,12)

wisi kúmbona (come to see me), (verses 13,14).

All these expressions opposed to “*manzála ga laká*” (we are strangled) emphasise the great need for the search for harmony.

7.2.3. *Kubikula* (.Revelations)

This is an appropriate form for conveying messages from the spiritual entities to the participants, through the medium, during the healing rituals. The medium employs proverbs and songs (see 2nd Case in *E.C.U.S.E.*), as well as ordinary speech, when answering the questions asked by the patients or their relatives. The answer involves the invisible beings to whom the community turns for a solution to their problems.

The dialogue with the assembly is chosen by *Zoomba* (in *Kubóonda*) and *Táá ngáanga* (in *Kizíku*) as a verbal expression for *kubikula*. The first aims at revealing the cause which delays the second couple of baby twins from walking, and the problem which opposes them:

Zoomba: Actually, we have already walked. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka!*

Zoomba: He [*Nsíimba*] says to me “do not go”. *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka!*

The dialogue used by *Táá Ngáanga* reveals the names of the ancestors called upon, and the names of *mpoongo* (sacred means for healing) needed by the participants to be used for the healing process:

Ngaanga: I am calling! Who can I call? I am calling!

I am ... *Ngimbi Makaanda! Ndúúndu*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka!*

Ngaanga: Oh, *Kiimpi! Kiimpi! Kiimpi! Kiimpi n'kisi kilawu!*

Kiimpi is *n'kisi* for/of madness). *Ndúúndu ...*

Assembly: *Ye Mbaka!*

The revelation made by an ancestress through the woman in a trance, is conveyed in the ordinary form of speech: “*N'kúúngá myéno ngwíldi, bú ngísí kíná kwámo [...]*” (I heard your songs, that is why I come to dance with you). Likewise, *Makaya's* revelations are expressed in the ordinary form of speech as reported by *Basáwula* in Section 3.1.

7.3. *N'kúúnga: (Song-Texts): An Expression of Thought in Mpangu Healing Rituals.*

N'kúúnga is another form of verbal expression employed in *Mpangu* healing rituals, besides the narratives, proverbs, etc. Two of the four healing rituals analysed in this thesis begin with a series of songs. The occurrence of singing throughout the performance of the rituals (except for *Nyóká-N'káwu*) is clear evidence that songs are an integral part of *Mpangu* healing rituals.

In various circumstances, the importance of ritual songs is so much stressed by the participants that some people see in them an essential condition for the success of a healing ritual. Kazadi Ntole (1990:19) observes that the *Luba* and *Hemba* people think that the spirits do not manifest themselves without the intervention of songs in a ritual. P. Berliner in “The Soul of Mbira” (1993:160-61) states that “Mbira music without singing is like *sadza* without *muriwo*” (grain porridge without vegetables). For the *Mpangu*, the singing during the healing rituals is another way of addressing both the visible and the invisible worlds. It is an important element of the ritual.

The performance of *Kizíku*, *Kubóonda* and Sunday Worship as they are described in this thesis, cannot be imagined without singing, because of the essential role played by the song-texts. They are the tools which ensure communication with spiritual entities.

The two reports on *Bankíta* rituals (Ch.3.1 and 3.2.), mention the performance of songs before going to the well to fetch the stones which represent the spirits of *Bankíta*, and when *Makáya* proceeds to take them out from the water. During the nine days spent at *Vweela* for initiation, the candidates are trained in singing to prepare them for their future functions in the society.

In many cases, the song-text substitutes for ordinary speech. For example, Song-text V,20: *Mu luleendo* (with [His] power) sung while the medium laid her hand on the patient (in *E.C.U.S.E.*), substitutes for the speech needed to explain the meaning of the healing action. The message conveyed by the song-text is that the medium is acting under the power of God. Her petition: “Father, guide me” concludes the idea expressed through the song-text.

The description of the four rituals shows that the fact of singing provides another form of “ritual language” besides speech. Singing goes beyond both ordinary speech and the special forms of verbal expressions such as *n’keenda* (narratives), *bingána* (proverbs) and *bimbiúmbi* (special style of dialogue) which are mostly addressed to the visible world.

Communication with the spiritual entities cannot be achieved by the use of *bingána* nor *n’keenda*. The technique of *bimbiúmbi* cannot be used to involve the members of the invisible world in the performance of the ritual. Conversely, the song-text is addressed to the visible as well as the invisible worlds. It can be sung by the members of the two worlds together as it happens in *Kizíku*. An ancestress comes (through the woman in a trance) to take part in singing and dancing with the assembly. In the ritual *Kubóónda*, the medium affirms that the Song-text: “*Ku mayeenga*” (IV,19) belongs to the spirits of the Twins, they inspired her. It is clear that the song-text is the common language used by the two communities involved in the healing rituals.

Regarding the song-texts, the *Mpangu* say: “*N’kuunga ka wáá ko, kaansi kitóólo*” (It is not the melody that matters, but the words). In this proverb the *Mpangu* oppose the melody to the words which compose a song, with the purpose of stressing the

importance of the words over the melody. For them, the words convey the meaning of the song while the melody provides an aesthetic mode of uttering these words. The expression of thought deals rather with the words than with the melody. A beautiful melody is not necessarily linked to beautiful words, and vice versa.

The *Bambara* people of Mali express a similar view regarding the melody and the words of a song. They say: "The song is not good but its meaning is" (Kassim Kone, 1995:25). Actually, putting the emphasis on the words does not deny the role of the melody which distinguishes the words "sung" from those "said" in ordinary speech. The *Mpangu* assume that the words "sung" last longer than those "said". Hence, the meaning is remembered for a longer time.

However, for the reasons explained above, the analysis provided in this section focuses exclusively on song-texts. My intention is to examine the extent of the contribution made by the song-texts in the healing rituals. In other words, what is the impact the song-texts have on the general performance of *Mpangu* healing rituals?

Considered as a verbal form of expression, the song-text is a means of communication which allows the use of poetic licence. This is the main characteristic of many song-texts performed during *kinzoonzi* and in some rituals related to the Twins.

Song-text II,8 illustrates well this mode of communication. It embodies Antoine's response to Pierre's speech:

É ku Makaanga kúkála nzoonzi e
(There were expert spokesmen at *Makáánga*)
.Kuyíká kwáni bimvwebedi e!
(Now, there are people who do not think deeply)
Mu Makaanga múkála baantu e
(There were famous people at *Makáánga*)
Muyíká kwáni biyunga, yááya e!
(Now, there are unwise people)

The words say that the village *Makáanga* no longer has good spokesmen as it did in the past. The real message conveyed is an assessment made by Antoine; he says that Pierre's speech fails because it lacks quality. The singer uses opposing terms to emphasise his message: *nzoonzi* (orators) opposed to *bimvwebedi* (unreasonable persons) (lines 1-2); *baantu* (famous persons) opposed to *biyunga* (unwise persons) (lines 3-4). Through this use of poetic licence, the singer can be free to address the assembly in a manner which is at once general and vague but also critical. Although he knows to whom his song-text is addressed, nobody is named; the message is offered, so to speak, to whomever is able to understand it. This form of criticism^{ue} cannot be said as such in ordinary speech. The singing, the charm resulting from the melody, and the use of poetic licence reduce the bitterness of the message which is conveyed, it facilitates acceptance.

In the case of the rituals for the Twins, poetic licence permits vulgar words and gestures to be performed publicly without shame. They are accepted as part of the ritual, (see the expression: *ikubúkímína* {I let you see my buttocks, Song-text IV,3, verse 4}). The ritual song-text is a verbal expression which is mainly considered as the linguistic code per excellence, "une parole bien dite" (a word well expressed) which influences the spirits, as observed by Ntole Kazadi (1990:18).

It has been observed that the performance of song-texts occurs in an almost unlimited number of contexts in everyday life (R. Finnegan, 1978:242). The great number of song-texts which accompany the performance of the healing rituals described in this thesis evidence this fact. They "speak" of various aspects of life, and have a distinct audience and a precise message to convey. To identify these messages, I will proceed by grouping the song-texts according to the general structure observed in the four healing rituals.

Because the song-texts are an integral part of the healing ritual, their messages may be affected by the periods of their occurrence during the performance of the ritual. The singer(s) make(s) choice of the song-text which is in tune with the stage of the ritual

process. Thus, I will discuss first the song-texts which are performed during the Opening Segment of the ritual, then, those which occur in the Main Segment.

My approach is mostly inspired by Ntole Kazadi's study which analyses *Luba* and *Hemba* possession songs. The writer's interest focuses on description and comparative analysis between the two ethnic groups, in order to demonstrate the major role of the song-texts in the phenomenon of possession. His methods are at the same time linguistic and literary, with reference to the social and cultural context from which the realities analysed originate. The song-texts are located in their ritual context and are interpreted according to it.

I will refer to the song-texts included in the four healing rituals described in the thesis, in order to establish a link between the words sung and the healing activity in process. Kazadi's interpretation of data results from an analysis based on three methodological aspects: linguistic (when related to the grammatical and semantic analysis of the song-texts), literary (when underlining specific aspects of the style) and ethnological (when related to the socio-cultural context of the performance). A fourth aspect which I will add, is the role which the song-texts play as an expression of thought during the healing rituals process.

7.3.1. Song-Texts in the Opening Segment of the Healing Ritual

All the song-texts gathered in this thesis were performed in the context of healing rituals. The thoughts expressed in them depend on the specific context in which they are sung. To identify the categories of song-texts, the *Mpangu* refer to the various circumstances of performance which affect both the content and the audience of a song-text. Hence, the song-texts which accompany the healing rituals I have analysed fall into the following categories: *n'kúúngá mí kínzóónzi* (songs for the important gathering); *n'kúúngá mí Kiziku* (songs for *Kiziku*); *n'kúúngá mí Bánsiimba* (songs for the Twins); *n'kúúngá mí Bánkita* (songs for *Bankita*) and *n'kunga mi Nzáambi* (songs for God).

Besides the reference to the circumstances and the destination of the message, this classification does not say much about the fact that the song-text itself is an expression of thought. Each healing ritual is a combination of actions, symbols and words performed for a specific purpose. According to the way the ritual functions, several stages can be observed such as the opening or introductory segment, the main segment and the closing section. Song-texts affect and are affected by these periods of occurrence, because they are an integral part of the healing rituals.

The following series of song-texts: II,1; II,2; II,3; II,4; II,5; II,6; II,7; II,8; II,9 are related to the issue discussed by Antoine and Pierre during *kinzoonzi* which prepares *Kiziku*. They encapsulate the essentials of the preparation needed by the participants before taking part in the ritual. Each message conveyed by each song-text is considered as an element of an ensemble which advances the ritual process and gives impetus toward achieving its final purpose. Song-texts are at the same time “guide” and “speech”. They convey messages and orientate the discussion between the two spokesmen and their people.

Synopsis of message	Analysis of message	Song-Text number
1. Indication of the goal of the meeting	General information Symbolic expression which means: “to be united”	II,1
2. Invitation to speak. Acknowledgement of personal rights. Encouragement to overcome hindrances.	Pierre is the one who has convoked the meeting; so, he is asked to introduce the object for discussion. This puts Pierre at ease, because his rights are acknowledged.	II,2; II,3; II,4; II,5.
3. Warning and advice regarding the methods of <i>kinzoonzi</i>	Only the truth must be told. Anything done is known by witnesses on earth as well as in heaven. God knows everything.	II,6

4. Assessment	Speech: lack of quality, incomplete. Pierre: called “ <i>Kimvwebedi</i> ” (who does not know how to conduct <i>kinzoonzi</i>).	II,7; II,8
5. Satisfaction	Achievement: <i>kinzoonzi</i> has achieved its objective.	II,9

Considered as verbal expressions, these song-texts accompany the segment *Kutá kinzoonzi* in order to prepare the participation in the ritual.

Similarly, the category of song-texts sung at the beginning of *Kubóonda* (IV,1 to IV,8) praise the Twins and their mother, as well as introduce the assembly to enter the “world” of the ritual. The messages conveyed can be summarised as follows:

Messages	Song-Texts & Number	
Greetings to welcome the Twins and their relatives.	<i>Mbóte-mbóte</i>	IV,1
Providing counselling and instruction for the parents and relatives about their behaviour regarding these children and the neighbours.	<i>Nyéngí-nyengi</i> <i>Kayáanga</i> <i>Maloonga móódí-móódí</i>	IV,2; IV,3; IV,5
Identity: the Twins are “sacred” and equal children.	<i>Túumbá bátuumba</i> <i>Bááná bán’lóongo</i>	IV,4 IV,7
They originate from the deeps.	<i>Ku mayeenga</i>	IV,6

The birth of the Twins is itself
an evidence of the generosity
of the ancestors. The Twins
are a special gift.

Waya-waya

IV,8

These concepts should be understood by everyone who participates in the ritual *Kubóónda*. The song-texts ensure this instruction. In the two rituals (*Kiziku* and *Kubóónda*), the lyrics in this segment are addressed to the members of the visible community for instruction and to challenge them to discuss the important issues.

The song-texts performed by the leaders in *Mpedozo*, the opening segment in *E.C.U.S.E.* prepare and introduce them to the main part of the ritual. The messages conveyed can be interpreted as the mutual reminding of the essential of the basic concept that the Holy Spirit is the One who accomplishes everything in the Church. The leaders, therefore, need His power (Song-text V,1). Song-texts V,2 and V,3 express the sorrowful condition in which the members of the Church live. They identify themselves as sheep without a pastor.

One can notice the transition from this world to the invisible world. Song-texts IV,9 *Nza lwíisa báána* (in *Kubóónda*) and II,10 *Keti lééká lúléédi?* (in *Kiziku*) play this role. They express calls (*nza lwíisa*: come), and attract the attention of the spiritual entities (*Keti lééká lúléédi*: are you sleeping?) on the concerns of the ritual. These lyrics are good examples of communication between the two worlds. Actually, it is during the performance of these song-texts that the spiritual entities manifest themselves. In *Kiziku*, *Táá Ngáánga* is inhabited by the spirit of the ancestors, and reveals the names of *mpoongo* needed for the healing process. In *Kubóónda*, *Zoomba* is inhabited by the spirits of the Twins, she announces that they come to heal their own mother.

7.3.2. Song-Texts in the Main Segment of the Healing Ritual

The encounter with the spiritual entities permits the direct communication between the two worlds. This is the experience lived by the participants during the main segment of

the ritual. The song-texts sung during this period of the ritual follow the thrust which is introduced by the transitional song-text. In the case of *Kiziku*, the category of song-texts II,10; II,11; II,13; II,14; II,22; and II,27 is called *n'kúúngá mí Kiziku* referring to the main segment of the ritual which bears the same name. They are also known as *n'kúúngá mí bákulu*, given the important role played by the ancestors in this ritual. The essential part of the message is the great desire of the participants to communicate with all their ancestors united. Song-text II,10 says:

1. *É Nsiimba ye Nzuzi e*
(Oh *Nsiimba* and *Nzuzi*)
2. *Ku mayeenga keti tóló lúléédi?*
(In the deeps, are you sleeping)?
3. *Munu kiléédi ko*
(I, I do not sleep)
4. *Maa N'tóómbó munu toombula mpoongo!*
(Mother *N'tóómbó*, take out the *mpoongo*)!

The four lines summarise the main issue of the ritual: the unity of the clan. The ancestors are called *Nsiimba* and *Nzuzi* in terms of the representation of this unity. The unity of the ancestors must reflect on the one which is sought by the participants. This unity has been expressed by Antoine in Song II,1, using the same symbol of *Nsiimba* and *Nzuzi*. The reference to *mayeenga* (the deeps) emphasises the concept of the two worlds already discussed in the previous chapter.

The question: "In the deeps, are you sleeping?" and the pat answer: "I, I do not sleep" attract the attention of the ancestors to the uneasy situation of the members of the clan. The improvement of life which the healing is expected to bring will come from the ancestors, who are referred to collectively by the name "Mother *N'tóómbó*" (also in Song-text II,14). It shows that the reconstruction of the clan involves all the members, the visible and the invisible alike, and this cannot be realised without harmony.

Kiziku is considered by the *Mpangu* as the healing ritual par excellence. Therefore, several of its songs can be called "Songs for Healing". The Song-texts II,13 and II,14

are two masterpieces of this category of songs. They accompany and reinforce the healing action.

While expressing the great need for communication with the ancestors, these song-texts also induce fear in the participants. It seems evident that the power of the song must be contained within the ritual, and it can become dangerous if performed outside this context. The main healing actions sought through these song-texts are *kulémba* (to appease) (Song II,13, lines 1 and 5), *kubóonda* (to heal and strengthen, lines 2 and 6) and *kutomisa* (to improve, lines 3 and 7). They are applied in terms of *kudyaatila*, *kuzyoodila* and patting the body of the patient as employed in the four healing rituals.

Song-text II,14 encapsulates the essential of the ritual and hence, of the real situation described symbolically in song-text II,13. This is an accusation as well as the cry for help. The three key expressions are:

- 1.- "*Máá N'tóombo*" (Mother *N'tóombo*) which stands for the ancestors.
- 2.- "*Toombuka*" (come out) which indicates the necessity of communication, in order to be healed.
- 3.- "*Manzála ga laká*" (to be strangled), a metaphorical expression which describes the sorrowful situation of the members of the clan.

Verses 7 and 11 show that the call has been accepted, the ancestors react: *Máá N'tóombo tómbokele* ... (Mother *N'tóombo* heard [our] voice and came out).

In the case of *Kubóonda*, the series of song-texts IV,9; IV,10; IV,11; IV,13; IV,14; IV,15; and IV,18 introduce the Twins as the citizens of the two worlds. This series repeats the themes already introduced in the introductory segment, namely the praise (IV,14); counselling (IV,15), and the children with prohibitions (IV,18; IV,24). To underscore the identity of the Twins as "mysterious" children, the theme of their origin is introduced (IV,17; IV,19) vaguely defined: *ku mayeenga* (in the deeps), *ku bisiinsa*.

The identity of the Twins cannot be fully defined without reference to *Bankíta* (special category of spirits of the ancestors). Song-texts IV,20; IV,21; IV,22; IV,23; IV,25; IV,26 and IV,27 stress the evidence of existing link between the Twins and *Bankíta*, (see Section 4.2.1). This link firstly occurs in the transitional song-text (IV,9) which obviously is addressed to the Twins to invoke their spirits to join the assembly who are performing the ritual. This lyric can be divided into two sections. The first section goes from verses 1 to 9, it is introduced by *Zomba*. This part is essentially addressed to the spirits of the Twins for welcoming them. The second section conducted by *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* (verses 10 to 12) introduces harmoniously themes related to *Bankíta*. Verses 13 to 16 are again addressed to the Twins. Finally, the singer-leader turns to *Bankíta* until the end of the song-text. The essential message conveyed is the request for healing addressed to *Bankíta*. *Zomba* mentions it as she explains why the second pair of baby-twins have been late in walking. She says: “These are their *n’kísi* (*mpoongo*) of the clan”.

There is a kind of movement expressed by the song-texts – going from the Twins to *Bankíta* and vice versa – which reinforces the concept of the two worlds in which the role of the Twins in the society is based. Actually, because the Twins are considered as citizens of both the visible and the invisible worlds, they are entrusted with special power. The fact that they are asked to heal their own mother illustrates this concept.

Unfortunately, the information gathered during the fieldwork research does not provide a healing ritual related to *Bankíta* which was performed with singing. *Basáwula* reported that the lack of assistants who ensure the singing, is among the reasons why *Máá Ndóóna* gave up the practice of *Bankíta* healing rituals (Chapter 3.1.). It seems clear that the full efficacy of the healing rituals depends on the combination of actions and verbal expressions in which the song-texts play an important role.

The picture produced by the song-texts sung during the main segment in *E.C.U.S.E.* seems slightly different from that analysed in *Kizíku* and *Kubóónda*. It happens, in some cases, during the performance of the ritual that the fact of singing together – which expresses unity and harmony – seems to be more important than the message conveyed

(Song-text V,13). According to the themes running through the song-texts in the main segment, three groups can be observed:

The first is composed of song-texts V,1; V,2; V,3; V,4; V,5; V,8; V,16; V,17; and V,18. They repeat and extend the themes of invocation and prayers introduced in the opening segment of the ritual. They can be interpreted as follows: *Bisyeelo* (leaders) see themselves as the soldiers of the army led by Jesus Christ, the “Valiant Warrior”. They must be as strong as He is. That is the reason why they invoke the Holy Spirit to be their shield (Song V,1). The reference to the war recalls the persecution undergone by *Kimbángu* before the official recognition of the Church of *Mpeeve ya N’loongo* (see Section 5.1.). This theme occurs frequently through the prayers said in the assembly by the leaders (*Kyóóni*, Evarist and the Pastor), especially in the song-texts V,2 and V,3.

The invocations and prayers are addressed to the Spirit of God, to Jesus, *Yáá Goonda* and *Táátá Kimbángu* (V,4; V,8; V,16; V,17; V,18). The term *Táátá* (father) confusedly refers to the Holy Spirit as well as to the two leaders. This confusion shows the way the adherents of this Church interpret their religious representation. They do not pay great attention to the theological definition of categories of spiritual entities. The communication with them seems to be the essential thing they look for.

The second group of song-texts is didactic. The main concern is to teach through what the song-text says. The instruction touches on morality (V,6; V,7; V,14) as well as geography and history related to the country and the Church of *Mpeeve ya N’loongo* (V,10; V,11). Finally, the song-text V,13 focuses essentially on the expression of the joy of worshipping together. The message seems irrelevant to the ritual; the aspect of entertainment overflows the atmosphere in the assembly.

The disparity of the themes expressed in this context of prayer hints^{at} the search for harmony with all the powers of the universe. The congregation refer to it by the repetition of the formulae of *bimbúmbi* which mark the beginning and the end of each stage of the ritual: “Peace in heaven! Peace on earth”!

It is interesting to note that the various themes running through the song-texts performed in the Sunday Worship represent the different needs of life. Therefore, the song-texts are also seen as an expression of the everyday life of the community: joy, sorrow, education, entertainment, etc. Although the ritual was held in the *Mpangu* area by *Kikóongo* speakers, verses 1 and 2 of Song V,9 were sung in *Lingala*, the language of the capital of the country, *Kinshasa*. In some cases, the fact of speaking other languages than *Kikóongo* indicates a kind of superiority expressed by the young people who join the Church. The language as a cultural and social legacy is linked to the performance of healing rituals.

“The requirements of social life often impose forms of linguistic behaviour on individuals or groups of individuals in given situations, to which are attached values that appear to govern their continued practice” (J.H. Nketia,1955:1). This reflection is helpful for understanding the necessity of using special forms of language adapted to the ritual in process. Actually, the “world” of the ritual differs from *that* of the everyday life. Similarly, the language to be used in this context must obey ritual requirements.

We have concluded that a healing ritual consists of a combination of actions and verbal expressions. The relation between them can be interpreted in terms of body and spirit of the ritual, that is, ritual actions constitute the body of the ritual, it is empowered by verbal expressions which represent ritual spirit, during the process. Various forms of verbal expressions explored through the four rituals described in this thesis, represent the specificity of *Mpangu* healing ritual. The passage from one ritual world to another has such an importance that it requires a special form of language. Such a difference characterises the style of the language used for *kinzoonzi* from which is used for *kingaanga*.

The role played by the song-texts, in the healing rituals is very significant since they involve the singer as well as the spiritual entities to whom they are addressed. Actually, many of these lyrics address the invisible beings (Song-text II,14), or the singer “speaks” on their behalf (Song-text IV,10). In many other cases, the assembly call directly on the spiritual entities (Song-texts V,8 and V,17). The song-texts are

themselves these expressions, not only by the various themes running through them, but also the fact that the participants sing together. This is the way harmony is expressed within the assembly or the congregation of the Church.

Verbal expressions not only empower the healing actions but link them together into one, unique expression. The religious context created by the healing rituals – within which the verbal expressions are performed – is based on *Mpangu* communal concept of what is called “religion” by scholars. We note that no word is provided in *Kikóongo* language to indicate this concept. Religion cannot be expressed by words alone, but through a combination of words with actions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this thesis has been to examine *Mpangu* healing rituals as expressions of religious thought. For the purposes of this study, religion has been defined simply as communication and interaction between living human beings and spiritual entities who reside in an invisible "other world".

The four healing rituals presented in the thesis clearly qualify as religious in that each of them is addressed to specific spiritual entities. *Kizíku* is addressed to *bakílu* (the ancestors), *Nyóká-N'káwu* to *Bankíta* (a special category of spirits of the ancestors), and *Kubóónda* to the spirits of the twins. The *Matóóndo* service in the E.C.U.S.E. church is addressed to a number of spiritual entities: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, as well as *Kimbángu* and other ancestors and elders such as *Yáá Goonda* to whom the adherents of this Church pray for blessings and protection.

It is worth noting that all the individuals mentioned in this thesis, including those initiated as religious experts such as *Táá Mfúmu*, *Máá Ndóóna* and others, are Christians, which strongly suggests that doctrinal statements about religious differences are of little concern to many *Mpangu* religious practitioners; what is essential to them is that they can bring about effective communication with the spiritual entities who can assuage the conditions of their lives.

The two parts of this thesis, the descriptions and comparative analyses of the four rituals, were designed to illustrate the various levels on which religious thought and concept are evoked in healing rituals. The detailed descriptions of the four rituals in Part One were designed to communicate, as much as possible, the actual content and atmosphere of the rituals performed, and also to provide explanations of the many actions and translations of the *Kikóongo* terms which occur; it is a kind of literal translation of the observable aspects of the rituals. The two analytical chapters in Part Two were designed to go beyond the observable, manifest forms of ritual performance in order to illustrate how the rituals themselves were structured with reference to these basic religious concepts.

We have seen how each ritual is divided into what ^{we} have called the opening and the main segments. The opening segment addresses the living members of the community or ritual congregation [the members of the clan, the patients, the congregation in the church], while the main segment of the ritual addresses the spiritual entities of the invisible world who are involved in that particular ritual. We have seen that these different ritual segments are characterised by different forms of ritual action and of ritual speech, *kinzoonzi* and *kingaanga*, respectively. This shift in the form of ritual language is directly related to the need for communicating in a different manner within the living community on the one hand, and with the entities of the spiritual world on the other. These structural elements of the ritual therefore reflect the basic religious concept which underlies our analysis: communication and interaction between two separate but interrelated worlds of living human beings and spiritual entities.

We can see now how closely the constituent elements of the ritual obey its basic structuring principle. Ritual actions and verbal expressions shift in accordance with the same design. Greetings, *n'keenda* (narratives), and *bingána* (proverbs), for example, constitute a communal form of communication among the members within the living community, in the opening segment of the ritual. Similarly the occurrence of certain ritual actions and verbal expressions depends on the different contexts in which they are performed.

For example, the dance illustrates what can be called "body language" which conveys various messages according to the ritual segment in which it occurs. In the opening segment of the ritual, the dance is an expression of welcome; while in the main segment, this action bears more than one meaning: an expression of approval, union, communion, encounter with spiritual entities and thanksgiving. The sudden change of rhythm in the medium's dance in *Kizíku* and *Kubóónnda* marks the moment of encounter with spiritual entities. The fact that these entities participate in the ritual dance signifies their approval of the ritual. For example, at the end of *Kizíku* the ancestress explained the reason why she joined the assembly and danced with them.

The existence of these ritual segments, and their associated ritual activities, also indicates that religious concepts in this context are not limited to explicit verbal statements about religion. A central objective of the analysis in Part Two has been to demonstrate that the *Mpangu* express their religious thought through a complementary combination of words and actions. And much of the meaning in any healing ritual is communicated implicitly.

For example, *kubikula* and other forms of *kingaanga* discourse, which are performed in the four healing rituals, reveal how meaning is dependent upon one's experience and understanding of the religious principles of the culture, which enables the participants to interpret the enigmatic responses given by experts and the mediums. One of the main aims of this analysis has been to illustrate this profound relationship among the religious culture and social aspects of *Mpangu* life.

As we have seen, the meaning of what is taking place, as well as the intentions of the ritual participants, always occurs on more than one level. One of the most obvious examples of this fact is that although a given healing ritual may be intended, on one level, to heal the afflictions of a single individual, the healing process inevitably addresses a community of living persons and spiritual entities (see *Nyóká -N'káwu*). An individual affliction is always treated as a matter of communal concern.

This fact is illustrated by the significance throughout all the healing rituals described here, of the concept of *ngwísáni* (harmony). The major aim of the ritual of *Kizíku* is to re-establish unity among all its members in both the visible and invisible worlds. The ritual *Kubóónda* was performed with a dual aim: to heal the young mother of the twins and to reconcile the second pair of baby twins with each other. The performance of this ritual demonstrates how the parents and relatives of the twins seek to have and maintain good relationships with all the invisible powers related to them. During the ritual there are expressions of gratitude for the generosity of the ancestors, regarding their close links with the Twins, but also a somewhat disguised fear of their invisible power. The performance of *Kubóónda* illustrates how intimately the visible and invisible worlds are linked for the *Mpangu*.

Fertility and prosperity are some of the precious benefits of the harmony sought through the healing ritual *Nyóká -N'káwu*, which although intended to heal a single individual, involves the entire clan, both living and dead. Fertility, like any state of good health, can be maintained only through a harmonious relationship with the invisible world of spiritual entities.

All three of these rituals were performed in response to a crisis; this is the usual pattern for healing rituals, which respond to afflictions and misfortunes caused by attacks from evil spirits or by punishment from ancestral spirits. But any individual case of illness or misfortune necessarily involves the entire clan in a communal search for harmony.

The religious services of the E.C.U.S.E. church are performed regularly, and are not necessarily a direct response to a specific crisis. However, the prayers, songs and invocations performed in the E.C.U.S.E. service communicate a sense of deep suffering among the members of the Church community. The harmony which is sought here is expressed as a kind of liberation of the individual and the community from various forms of affliction and bondage.

It is evident in all four of the rituals that the individual and the communal dimensions are closely linked. The objectives sought in each ritual, such as reconciliation, healing, fertility and liberation, affect the well being of the entire community, the clan of which the individual is a member. This emphasis on the communal, on the individual within a community, is fundamental to *Mpangu* religious thought.

Songs play a particularly important role in expressing the communal aspects of *Mpangu* religious thought. More than any other form of verbal expression, the song-text represents a communal "language" employed by all the ritual participants in both of the two worlds. Through songs the human community expresses its requests for assistance from the spiritual entities, who in turn often respond in song. The spiritual entities intervene in the song by inspiring the medium regarding the choice of suitable song-text, and the moment to perform it during the ritual. In the ritual *Kubóonda*, the song-

text IV,19: *Ku mayeenga*, was attributed to the Twins; *Zoomba* said: “This song is theirs, they inspired it [to me]”. The song-text is also a privileged form of expression which is used in order to talk about matter which cannot be expressed in ordinary speech. This form of social criticism often appears in rituals as the first step toward achieving the communal sense of harmony which is the ultimate aim of most ritual performances.

In conclusion, we can say that the various forms of expression which have been discussed in this thesis emphasise the specificity of *Mpangu* religious thought. This explains the difficulties in translating one form of thinking into another. Actually, the analysis of the healing rituals, in this thesis, aimed at exploring *Mpangu* forms of expressing religious thought. The translation is not limited to the linguistic level only; the essential is to present these expressions in a way that they can be understood by readers outside the *Mpangu* culture. The descriptions, interpretation and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the four healing rituals among the *Mpangu*, constitute our contribution to the general field of the study of religious expression.

APPENDIX

DIFFERENT TYPES OF *KINZOONZI*

1. *Kinzoonzi ki kaanda*

It sometimes happens that the clan is torn apart by divisions due to different causes. This is the context of and the reason for *kinzoonzi ki kaanda* (discussion on the issue of the clan), to sort out the situation and to try to rebuild the unity within the clan. This is one of the chief responsibilities of the head of the clan.

My informants observed that tension occurs frequently nowadays between an uncle and his nephews/nieces and their mothers. In this case, the uncle feels offended and cannot play his role in uniting his people. It is then the affinity members *bazitu ye bankwéési* or *banzádi* (female members' husbands) who take the initiative to convoke a meeting for reconciliation. The affinity members are interested in helping the clan to restore good relationships because in this way they protect their own children against any evil influence due to divisions within their wives' and children's clan.

The procedure is to explain the problems which cause the divisions. Everyone is urged to acknowledge his own guilt, to confess it and ask for forgiveness. It happens also that a fine has to be paid according to the offence caused. The final point of *kinzoonzi ki kaanda* is to reconcile all the members involved.

2. *Kikúúla* (Process for acquiring lost status, rights and relationships)

This is a special meeting also called: *kinzoonzi ki báántú bánsuumba* (a meeting about "sold and bought" persons). Actually, all the members of *kaanda* (the clan) are not bound together by the same type of link. The fact of belonging to the clan is by way of blood relationship between those whose mothers are daughters of the same clan, and other members linked to the clan by their ancestor who was sold and bought and introduced into the clan of the buyer.

All the persons called "*baantu bánsuumba*"(sold and bought persons) or "*baantu bánsuumba*" (persons for whom money was paid) are not always the descendants of a "slave" ancestor. There are those called "*bááná bá bákééntó bálóóngo*" (the children of women who have lived in their husband's village for years, and whose contact with their own clan is lost).

Given the exogamous and virilocal system practised in the *Mpangu* society, children are usually born in the husband's village. However, the role played by the wife's brother, the maternal uncle, remains. He is regarded as the owner of children and head of the clan. Therefore, he is expected to take part in all the important events which touch his sister and her children. That is, the event of death or of a severe and long illness. It does happen that, if for years no one keeps in contact with them, after the death of their grandmother and mother, they are cut off from the clan, since they seem to be unaware of all links. The status of these people is similar to that of *baantu bánsuumba* since they do not know where they came from.

Another type of introduction of *baantu bánsuumba* in the clan, as described by MacGaffey, (1986) originated from the promotion of the slaves, without any special effort on their part. This happened when their owners realised that the number of their own members of the clan had decreased for whatever reason and decided to "co-opt" the slaves as a new lineage of the house.

I do share MacGaffey's point of view that the real difference between free men and "slaves" is not an absolute, but a scale for relative political security. However, it is important to note that when this situation becomes a matter of gossip and dispute among the inhabitants in the village (this often happens in connection with the land to be used for cultivation or as a site for the construction of a house), the situation becomes unbearable.

As soon as these people are aware that they have no rights either in the village where they live, or in the land where they work, they look for their own *kaanda*. This is a long process with several stages:

The persons treated as outcasts gather together to examine their situation; they decide then to ask for *kikúúla* (buying themselves) meaning by this to acquire once again their own dignity.

A representative of a small group introduces the problem to the head of the clan in which they live. The whole process depends on finding out where they came from and to which clan they belonged. The clan among whom they are actually living very likely knows this and can give the necessary information to the persons who ask them those questions in order to start the process of *kukikúúla* (buying themselves) in order to regain their dignity, rights and relationship.

The owner convokes a meeting with his own members to discuss the policy for answering the question or not. In the case he is not aware of the origin of these people, he would proceed to look for information. This can lead him to consult a diviner. After that, he can answer the question during another meeting convoked by him.

Then comes the ritual for *kusukula meenga* (to clean the blood), that is to move from the state of *baantu banziimbu* (the sold and bought persons) to that of free people.

The expression of "*kusukula meenga*" speaks volumes. In the past, the situation of *baantu bánsuumba* (sold and bought persons) could be compared with that of animals and other "prestige goods"¹ since they could all be sold and bought together in the market, or exchanged during any important occasions from one owner to another. Nowadays, the most dreaded aspect of *kimuuntu nziimbu* (state of being a person whom a certain sum of money was paid for) is related to *kindoki* (occult power). That is, given that in general, *baantu banziimbu* do not know the name of the ancestor founder of their clan of origin, they are totally bereft of protection. These persons are abandoned and forsaken; they have no one to refer to. Their owner may do whatever he likes with them. In the special case of *kindoki* (occult power), he can "eat" them or let them to be "eaten" by other *bandoki* (sorcerers) for the purpose of paying his debts with human flesh.

To prepare the ritual of *kusukula meenga*, a male goat is killed for the ritual meal. A symbolic amount of money is given to the former owner as they say: "We were sold

and bought, we now reimburse you. From now on we are free people and wish to return to our village". They are given a piece of land in the new village if they are accepted; otherwise, the search continues. To illustrate this kind of *kinzoonzi*, an informant described his own father's situation:

"My father did not know where he came from. Even his owner's descendants did not know it. The diviner consulted said to them: "You are from the village of *N'tádi*, the name of the little girl who was sold and bought is *Luzombolo*". Actually, she is my father's grandmother. Then my father went to the village of *N'tádi* to question the head of the clan. The latter acknowledged the fact that, many years ago, in his clan, a little girl called *Luzombolo* was sold. Since then, no one had heard of her. That is why there are several girls with this name now, to remember her. My father introduced himself saying: "I am a *Luzombolo*'s descendant. From that day he proceeded to return to *N'tádi*, his village. He went and lived there with the members of his family till he died in 1985" (J. Malaka).

3. *Kinzoonzi ki magógila* (Intercessions)

It is interesting to bear in mind, and my informants insisted on it, that there is no illness without a cause, meaning preternatural cause, in the *Kóongo* society, this applies to the *Mpangu* too. When a member of the family is ill, it is the responsibility of the relatives to look for healing. When the illness persists, they must look for the cause in order to prevent the worst. *Magógila* is a meeting or series of meetings held on behalf of a sick member of the clan. Its only goal is to obtain healing.

The head of the clan, or the sick person's father, helped by the head of the clan, will convoke important members of the clan. The affinity members are also associated; they play the role of councillors.

Each of the sick person's relatives is asked to speak, to say anything they know about the sick person and his/her illness. A confession is required in case there were any tensions between them. The sick person also is asked to speak about anything he/she

knows in connection with this illness. After hearing everyone, the notables and elders consult one another in private in order to find a solution.

It does happen that sometimes after this *kinzoonzi ki magógila* (meeting for intercession) the sick person feels better. When there is no solution, the search continues, the relatives consult one diviner after another until they are satisfied with an answer which allows them to move into the appropriate healing ritual.

If the sick person is guilty of any misbehaviour regarding the customs or the elders, and thinks he/she has been cursed, an appropriate ritual for purification and reconciliation will take place.

4. *Kinzoonzi ki máfwa* (meeting regarding a dead relative)

Before describing this type of *kinzoonzi* it is important to remember two basic principles of *kitááta* (patrilineage) and *kimááma* or *kaanda* (maternal lineage or the clan) as explained in chapter one. They determine the person's position within *kaanda* and all the actions to be taken in the context of *kinzoonzi ki máfwa* (meeting about the dead relative).

This meeting begins, so to speak, immediately a relative dies, and it can last several years after his/her death. Its main aims are to prevent the same unfortunate death being repeated and to ensure cohesion in the clan. To achieve this goal, the meeting moves through stages. This means, from the point of clarifying the circumstances of death, to the knowledge which enables the relatives to determine the cause of it, and the effort of comforting the affected persons and purifying all the clan.

As soon as an uncle and head of the clan, who represents the lineage of *kimááma*, is aware of his relative's death, he must inform the father in the formal way. That is, he sends *n'sámú fwa* (a message of death) consisting of an oral or written message: "Your *mwáána* (child, son/daughter) has died, you may begin mourning" and a calabash of palm wine. [The term *mwáána* is used no matter how old the dead person is].

At midday, the crowd that gathered to participate in the mourning is informed: the head of the clan offers a calabash of wine, saying: “We are mourning”. Then he explains briefly the circumstances of the death.

Before proceeding to the burial, another calabash of wine will be offered to the father asking permission to bury the body of his/her *mwáána* (child). With a brief speech the father expresses his will. He might impose fines before allowing the burial.

When the crowd returns from the graveyard, the head of the clan offers a calabash of wine for “purification” saying: “All of us are soiled by this death, we must purify ourselves”. The last calabash of wine is meant to thank and send away the crowd of participants. The members of the family come together to decide the date for *kinzoonzi* to take place. It can be held the following day.

When the day comes, the relatives, the affinity members, friends and influential persons are convoked by the head of the clan. The latter, who is regarded as the most affected person by his relative’s death, is replaced by a *nzoonzi* (a spokesman) to lead *kinzoonzi*. At this stage, the style of this meeting is similar to that of *magógila* (the meeting for intercessions), that is, after formal greetings, the spokesman explains the issue of the meeting: to find out the cause of death of the relative. Then each member is invited to speak and tell anything he/she knows about the dead person.

As we have seen above, one of the goals of *kinzoonzi ki máfwa* is to ensure the cohesion among the members. That is the reason why the cause of the death must be known and be destroyed by an appropriate remedy in terms to save the unity of the clan, since very often it happens that suspicions cause divisions among the members.

If no solution has been found at the end of *kinzoonzi*, a representative committee of *kitááta* (patrilineage) and *kimáama* or *kanda* (matrilineage or clan) is sent to consult diviners and seers “voyants”. On their return, a special meeting is organised to hear the report. The nature of the message determines the action to be taken.

5. *Kinzoonzi ki n'tóto* or *Myóóndo*

This type of *kinzoonzi* deals with discussions about the ownership of lands and their boundaries. In present day society this is the activity in which *Bakóongo* spend a considerable part of their time. Consequently, many villages have disappeared, since, as soon as it becomes clear that such and such a clan is not the owner of a given piece of land, the members are urgently asked to leave the land and settle elsewhere.

According to my informants, the basic principle is that for a *mukóongo* (a member of the ethnic group of *Bakóongo*) in the position of *mfumu kaanda* (head of the clan), the land represents the clan of whom he is the ruler. He inherited the land from his ancestors and must preserve it as such. To lose even one square inch of this land is regarded as betraying the clan. The land and the clan belong together. Unfortunately, not all of the people acknowledge this principle, nowadays. The rich seek to extend the boundaries of their lands. They usurp the lands belonging to poor clans. The situation is rendered worse by the strange policies in use in the courts which are composed of persons who are not aware of the basic principle of *Bakóongo*'s relationship with their land. Therefore, the practice of the present *kinzoonzi ki n'tóto* is distorted and is increasingly different from what *myóóndo* formerly were.

According to the *Bakóongo* customs, in the case of disagreement about disputes over land boundaries, the head of each clan involved refers the matters to the committee of elders. The latter convokes experienced persons of the region, since they are aware and possess the knowledge regarding the limits of the lands belonging to the neighbouring clans. This convocation is announced by an appropriate melody composed of special beats of *móóndo* (plural: *myóóndo*)² a kind of drum used for this occasion.

The plaintiff and the defendant in turn explain the way they inherited the land in question. The names of the ancestors who owned the land must be mentioned and their tomb must be identified in the graveyard.³ The witness of the other owners of lands in the neighbouring clans is vital. After hearing everyone's explanation, the committee is

able to clarify the situation and reconcile the rival clans. These meetings could last several months. Each day closes with an evening dance accompanied by songs. *Móóndo* is played until the end.

Nowadays, observed informants, *myóóndo* are replaced by the “*Tribunaux Coutumiers*”, a kind of court inspired by both customs and state legislation. They try to follow the principle of the elders’ committee. It often happens that, dissatisfied with the final decision made by the “*Tribunaux Coutumiers*”, people appeal to the higher court hoping to win their case. Unfortunately, as we have said above, these courts are composed of persons from outside the *Kóongo* ethnic group. For them money is more important than their customs. The verdict goes in favour of the best bidder. Thus, *kinzoonzi ki n’tóto* is totally distorted, nowadays. Instead of reconciliation between the clans, it happens that after this kind of *kinzoonzi* people hate each other.

6. *Kinzoonzi ki loongo* (meeting about a marriage regarding a relative)

Two aspects of *kinzoonzi ki loongo* seem to merit being described here:

A. When a young woman has been asked for in marriage by a young man, helped by her mother, she informs her uncle (her mother’s brother) about the young man, his family and the proposal for marriage. In a formal way, the uncle informs his niece’s father (his brother-in-law). After consulting with his own relatives, the father draws up a list of the goods and money he expects to be given and sends this list to the uncle. The latter hands it over to the young man. The discussion can be very long as they are seeking a point for agreement.

At this stage of *kinzoonzi ki loongo*, the authority of the father is taken seriously, even exaggerated, for *taata nzáámí n’tóto* (the father [is] a god on the earth) as people used to say. His favourable or unfavourable attitude determines the future of his daughter’s matrimonial life. The uncle, in his position of owner of the children,⁴ seeks rather a happy and prosperous life for his niece than gaining material goods. The fact that his niece is lucky enough to get married ensures her dignity and is a great honour for the

uncle. Moreover, the children to be born from his niece would constitute his reward. That is why the uncle is concerned about making his niece's father happy.

As soon as the agreement is obtained regarding the amount of money and other goods required, the list is sent to the young man or to his uncle. When everything is ready, a representative group of *kimááma* or *kaanda* (matrilineage or the clan) and *kitááta* (patrilineage) makes a date for the formal presentation of gifts to the young woman's family which is composed of the members of *kitááta* and *kimááma* too.

The presentation of gifts is followed by a joyful celebration which concludes the marriage ceremony between the two families involved. From then on, a new link has been brought into existence. In case they agree to have a Christian blessing of the marriage, a date will be fixed by common consent. Otherwise, the same day, after the parents' blessing, the young man may take his bride with him. They are married. Here ends the first aspect of *kinzoonzi ki loongo* whose goal is to ensure a fruitful and harmonious life for the new couple.

B. The second aspect I would like to describe is the case of *kufuunta* (the fact that a young woman cannot find a suitable partner, and waits in vain). This is a serious situation which needs to be put right.

The father meets his brother-in-law, his daughter's uncle and says: "My daughter is ready to be married. Why cannot she find a suitable partner? Do you have any complaint against her?" By means of these questions the father, in thinly veiled terms, hints at an accusation, and demands that the clan should intervene to improve his daughter's situation.

Then the uncle convokes his relatives and explains the problem. Everyone is invited to speak about the issue according to the *kinzoonzi ki magógila* (the meeting for intercession). The meeting ends with a confession of any harmful word said toward the young woman, and forgiveness. A fine may be imposed, if necessary. Then everyone expresses blessings and wishes for good luck as they conclude the meeting. If the

situation does not change, diviners would then be consulted to find out the cause of this misfortune.

Young women are more concerned with this kind of problem than young men. However, it may happen, although rarely, that a young man is not thinking about getting married. The fact that he does not think about it is interpreted as an abnormality, an illness which the family seeks to heal by *kinzoonzi*. A case of such a young an, I was told, illustrates the above:

“I have a cousin who never thought of getting married. His uncle was very concerned about the situation, so he convoked the important members of the clan. My cousin was invited to that meeting, too, and was asked: ‘What is the matter with you? You have already reached the age for marriage. You have a house, you have farms. Why do you not think of getting married?’

‘There is nothing special’, answered my cousin, ‘but I do not have any inclination to get married’.

As *kinzoonzi* had failed, the family went to consult a diviner. The answer was that the young man was already married. He had been married to a *kisimbi* (a local spirit of the dead). The diviner declared that an old woman had cast a spell on my cousin and had taken him as her husband. That was why he did not feel the need to take another wife, since he lives with an invisible woman who is thought to be his wife.

When I questioned my cousin about all of this, he answered:

‘I do not know anything about this. The thing is that I am not interested in getting married’

Although the diviner provided a variety of remedies, the situation remained unchanged. To this day, my cousin is still an unmarried man. He does not feel the need for getting married. Maybe this is a psychological case". (J. Malaka).

The goal sought by this kind of *kinzoonzi* was the healing of the young man from what was considered to be *fúna* (bad luck) shown by a lack of interest in marriage. *Kinzoonzi* led the family to find out at least the cause of this situation.

7. *Kinzoonzi ki makwééla* or *Kinzoonzi ki n'kéénto ye yakala*

This kind of *kinzoonzi* deals with conjugal problems. Its chief aim is to ensure a harmonious relationship between a wife and her husband. To achieve this goal, *kinzoonzi* must succeed in resolving their problems and in bringing about a reconciliation between the couple. This type is also called *kinzoonzi ki n'kéénto ye yakala* (a meeting to discuss about a wife and [her] husband) or *kinzoonzi ki báántú bákweela* (a meeting regarding married persons).

It could happen that after a period of great misunderstanding, the relationship between a wife and her husband deteriorates. Then, tired of that situation, the wife leaves her husband's house and returns to her family with all her belongings. According to custom, this woman should go to her uncle's house.

During the following days the uncle meets the husband's uncle to say to him: "I see my niece has returned home. What happened?" This visit with this simple question, is the formal way in which to inform the husband's uncle and ask him if he is aware of the problem. The latter then convokes his nephew to discuss the problem with him. Afterwards a date is fixed for the *kinzoonzi* which takes place at the village of the husband's uncle.

The wife, accompanied by her uncle, her parents (at least the mother) and a few of her close relatives, are also convoked. When all the members expected are settled,

kinzoonzi begins. It is led by a committee of *banzoonzi* (spokesmen) composed of the uncles or their representatives from the two groups which seek a negotiation; their counsellors are also present.

First, the wife is asked to explain the reason why she left her husband's house. Then the husband explains his point of view. After hearing the two, *banzoonzi bééle mfulu* (the spokesmen consult each other in private). When they come back they give some counselling or impose fines, not only to the one who is regarded as guilty; in addition, each would be summoned to pay a fine called *kufuta n'siku luzitu* (to pay for the honouring respect). That is, the respect due to each other's dignity.

Fines consisting of live animals from a cock, a goat, or a sheep to a pig; each is accompanied by a number of calabashes of palm wine, according to the importance of the offence. When the fine has been paid, the husband and his uncle are informed by the wife's uncle of the date when she could return to her husband's house. She would be accompanied by her uncle and parents. This would be the end of *kinzoonzi* for a wife who has left her husband.

If the wife has been evicted by her husband, then it would be he and his uncle who would have to pay *n'siku luzitu* (for honouring respect) and other fines to his wife and her family in order to honour their dignity. After a brief period of counselling he would be allowed to take her back with him.

In our society today, communication with relatives has changed. It does happen that instead of leaving home (in the case of the wife) or expulsion (in the case of the husband), the one who feels offended writes a message to his/her own uncle or parents and asks them to visit the couple. The one who receives the message informs the other and they go together to hear their niece/nephew and to counsel them.

In the case of a delicate matter which should not be heard by an uncle nor by the parents, an aunt (the father's sister) might replace the uncle and then she counsels them to bring about the reconciliation of the married couple.

These are the policies provided by the customs of *Bakóongo* to resolve problems which might spoil and destroy a harmonious life between a wife and her husband. Moreover, these policies contribute towards fostering the links between the wife's clan and her husband's.

In the present condition of the *Kóongo-Mpangu* society, many of these policies are unknown to the young people, especially in the cities and big agglomerations. A reason, and this was underlined by the informants, is the mixture of customs and traditions belonging to other ethnic groups. Young people pay more attention to the fashionable practices in which everyone is involved than to the specific behaviour peculiar to each ethnic group. A new society is growing.

Even in the rural context, marriage celebrations according to the customs are decreasing. This situation is mostly due to the economic problems which affect the whole of society. Given that formal marriage costs so much money, many young men and their relatives cannot afford to get married. There are two lower forms of initiating married life, frequently in use now: a young woman is made pregnant by a young man and he is summoned by the young woman's parents to take her with him; or a young woman elopes with her lover.

Each of these situations may be treated or not, afterwards, by a *kinzoonzi*. Very often they create tensions between the parents of the young woman, (for the tendency is that husbands always blame their wives regarding their daughter's misbehaviour). A series of *kinzoonzi* is needed to put the situation right. It is also clear that these are twisted circumstances in which neither *kinzoonzi ki loongo* nor *kinzoonzi ki makwééla* can operate as they are described above, since parents and relatives were not involved in the process at the very beginning of the "marriage" arrangements. They are not able to intervene when things go wrong within the couple. Therefore, the goal aimed at by these types of *kinzoonzi* cannot be reached.

We have noticed another important change in the present society: instead of returning to her uncle's house, a woman who leaves her husband joins her father's house. My informants explained this situation in connection with other changes introduced in the society. There are fathers who are not aware of the customs; this appears especially in the cities where, as we have said, the inhabitants are affected by the influence from other cultures and traditions. Their environment is new and different from that of the village.

It is also true that the number of broken marriages is greater in the cities than in the villages. Thus, the wife whose parents live in the same city, prefers to join them rather than go to her uncle, since, in many cases, there are no close links between her and her uncle. The tendency now is that, the father's influence over his children has developed to such an extent that it takes over that of the uncle on his nephews/nieces.

All of these changes, insignificant though they seem to be, can be a hindrance to the *kinzoonzi ki makwééla* (meeting for a discussion concerning married persons) which is based on the social structure system. Consequently, broken marriages remain as such since the policies provided by the customs are rejected, they cannot work. This is a reason why the heads of the clans and elders in the villages are very anxious about the future of the society. An adaptation with a new structure is needed to permit the society to function harmoniously

Before concluding this section which describes various types of *kinzoonzi*, it is important to underline that, although specific goals each type of *kinzoonzi* is meant to achieve, there is a constant, that is, the search for *kutóma* (well being). Then *kinzoonzi* is expected to bring a kind of "healing", (no matter its form) or, at least, to find out the cause of the problems which disrupt or might disrupt a harmonious life within the community, be it *kaanda* (the clan) or *nzo loongo* (a married couple).

In connection with the healing ritual of *Kiziku*, as described in this thesis, the role played by *kinzoonzi* has various meanings. According to the structure of the ritual, *kinzoonzi* can be regarded as the first and indispensable stage, for it is the point of

departure for any healing ritual in particular, and for any important action in general, in the *Mpangu* society.

For this reason, before thinking of celebrating *kikziku*, the spokesman urged the participants first to come together in order to sort out their problems, since *kinzoonzi* can be regarded as a diagnosis of the problems. To achieve this goal, he called them together and told the story of *Zongesi* (the red-bird) and *Ngó* (the leopard) and their cities of *Ngwiísána* (harmony) and of *Lubáángámu* (hate). The dialogue which followed the story allowed the participants, led by the storyteller, to identify the problem, that is, to carry out a diagnosis of their own situation, and then, to look for a solution. In this case, the solution sought is “*mbáánsá Ngwiísání túzólele tutuunga*” (we want to build the City of Harmony), said the storyteller. By this he meant the need to re-establish good relationships among all the members of the clan, so that anyone in the clan could enjoy harmony.

Moreover, according to its efficacy, *kinzoonzi* is considered to be itself a healing ritual. That is, it succeeds in overcoming the event or situation which causes the disorder; it recreates a new environment of life and liberates individuals from any evil influence they are bound by.

The fact that by means of *Kinzoonzi ki kikúúla*, for instance, these persons can find their clan, that they can pay for their ransom and recover their dignity, constitutes the final aim which this type of *kinzoonzi* can attain. It is precisely in this that the “healing” lies because it creates, not only a new environment, but also new persons. *Kinzoonzi* created “new” members for the clan.

NOTES

Appendix

¹ "Prestige goods": Terms used by MacGaffey, (1986:28) to indicate the goods related to the prestige sphere in the nineteenth century society of *Bakóóngo*: slaves, as well as ivory, guns, gun power and cloth, to name but a few.

² *Myóóndo*: The term refers to a musical instrument called "*móóndo*" (plural: *myóóndo*), (log drum) which is a wooden, cylindrical drum played with two sticks. *Móóndo* is played in specific circumstances such as mournings and funerals, for announcing special news, and for *kinzoonzi ki n'tóto* (meetings for the purpose of discussing the ownership of lands). The fact that in the past, *móóndo* was the only musical instrument allowed to accompany *kinzoonzi ki n'tóto*, that is, arguments about lands. This is what it meant when the spokesman said: "*Ka gena myóóndó ko*" (there are no festering discussions about lands).

³ In the past, special stones called: *makéla* were used to identify the tombs. Nowadays, the members of the clan are expected to cement the tombs of important relatives. In this way they thank the elders, but also it is to facilitate an identification of the tombs.

⁴ Given that the structure of *kaanda* (clan) is based on the matrilineage principle, an uncle who is the mother's brother, is regarded as the head of the clan and owner of his sister's children. They are part of his clan. The father is regarded as begetter and "guardian"; he provides for his children protection from all kinds of evil or physical influences. Thus the proverb: "*N'kedi Kyoóngi, mu mwééló wúlélékáánga*" (the shotgun of *Kyoongi* [the father as protector] must always be ready by the door).

Nowadays, there is conflict between the two principles, the father's authority over his children seems to replace that of the uncle. This happens especially with educated men, for some reasons such as: in today's society, educated children are a "reward" for their parents. Each father has the duty to ensure his children's education. To achieve this goal, the father spends an important amount of money. Consequently, he claims his authority over his children. At the same time, relationships between the uncle and his nephews and nieces become gradually distant.

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Basáwula, J. (F)

Interviewed on 25 March 1995 at *Nkáádu*. Born in 1923, she is a peasant and mother of 11 children (8 are alive). She has been initiated as *Mabííndá má Ngóómbó* (the one who interprets and explains revelations in her clan). She also has been called *Máá N'laambi* (the cook, for she has cooked for people in the process of initiation at "*Vweela*" which is the hut for the ceremonies of initiation).

Budyóóngo, A. (F)

Interviewed on 21, 26 May and 2 June 1995 at *Nséke*. She is known in the rituals as *Kinkóló kí Mpóóngo* (the one who has died the death of *Bankíta*) because she has been initiated as *Ndóóná Bánkita* through the ritual of *Vweela*. She is in charge of Bankita's service. As a consequence, she is a healer of several kinds of illnesses, the causes of which are attributed to *Bankíta*. She is a mother of the Twins and plays a special role in the rituals for the Twins.

Bungúdi, B. (F)

Interviewed on 27 February 1995 at *Mpése*. She was about 25 years old at the time of the interview. She lives with her mother who is a *Ndóóná N'luúnga* or *Ndóóná Bákulu* (Crowned Lady for the service of the ancestors).

Dimbáámbu, E. and Kimfwééma, H. (Couple)

Interviewed on 12 April 1995 and on 11 June 1995 at *Ngééba*. They are also the parents of Twins. They are in charge of all the rituals related to the Twins: *Kukeembisa* (praising), *Kubóónda* (strengthening and healing), *Kuziika* (giving them the appropriate funerals) in the village of *Ngééba* and environs.

Kin'géemba, (Mfumu-) (M)

Interviewed on 8 March 1995 at *Mpése*. Born in 1961, he was nominated to become chief when he was four years old. He has been crowned as *Táá Mfúmu N'luúnga* (Crowned Chief for the service of the ancestors) in 1965, for the clan of *Ngéemba*. He is a peasant. On appropriate days, he accomplishes his duties as a Crowned Chief: to feed his ancestors, to pray for all his members in the clan and for people of other clans, to ask blessings and prosperity for them.

Kyaala, L. (M)

Interviewed on 23 May 1995 at *Léemfu*. *L. Kyaala* was born in 1928 at Kinseendi (in *Léemfu* region). He did his basic studies between 1933-1944. He was married in 1949, and is the father of 8 children (all of whom have been educated and have Diplomas). Notable for great knowledge of *Mpangu* traditions, he has worked with the missionaries for many years at *Léemfu* Parish.

Kyawéte, B. (M)

Interviewed on 23 May 1995 at *Nséke*. He is a young nurse educated at Kimpése (*Bandibu* land). The interview took place in the small dispensary of which he has been in charge for two years. He has collaborated with *Yáfu* in healing a patient Nzuzi who was suffering from *Yáámbá dí Nzázi*.

Lugéemba, L. (M)

Interviewed on 3 and 5 April 1995 at *Kitomisa* (Quarter of village *Kipáko*). Aged about 45 years, *Lugéemba* has been a well known healer in the area since 1980, for several kinds of illnesses, namely *Mbúdi* (swollen abdomen), *Lupansi* (stitch) and *Kibéka* (pain in one's spleen). *Lugéemba* is also known as *Saangila Mpoongo* (the initiated man entrusted with the entertainment of *mpoongo*, the sacred medicines). It is he who has raised them from the water. He is a peasant, and the father of four boys.

Maambú Mákoónso, I. (M)

Interviewed on 8 April 1995 at *Ngéeba*. He is a peasant about 65 years old. He has been known as a healer since 1950 for: *Nkósí-Kibóta* (bleeding from the nose), *Wumba*

(alternating between feeling hot and cold), *Ngabafu* (male impotence), *Ngĩmbi*, *Nyóká-N'ku*, *Mbúdi*, *Kiita*. He has been himself initiated through "*Vweela*" as "*Táá Mfúmú Bánkita*" in 1950. Since then he has been in charge of serving *Bankita* and healing patients.

Mafuta Mbáála, A. (M)

Interviewed on 8 March 1995 at *Mpése* addressing a group of two *Táá Mfumu* (Crowned Chiefs), one *Máá Ndóóna* (Crowned Lady) and their assistants. *Mafuta Mbáála* is known as "*Mfúmú N'símbú Máfuta*" for having been crowned chief, *Táá Mfúmú N'luunga* or "*Mfúmú Bákulu*" for the clan of "*Nsímbú Lúkeni*" since 1985. In addition, he is President of the "Association Compagnie des Ancêtres Bantu", former Headmaster of a Primary School in Kinshasa, teacher of Kindergarten School at *Mpése* and Parish Co-ordinator of "Xaveri", a Catholic Youth organisation.

Makeengo (M)

Interviewed with *Mafuta*, *Kin'géemba* and *Ndóóna Nínga* on 8 March 1995 at *Mpése*. He is known as "*Ngaangula Makeengo*". Born on 15 May 1960, he is a member of the clan *Ntuumba N'veémba* or *N'géemba*. Since 1980 he exercises the function of *Ngaangula* in collaboration with *Mfúmú Kin'géemba*.

Makeengo, J. (Máámá Sofi) (F)

Interviewed on 17 May 1995 at *Nséélo*. *Máámá Sofi* has been initiated through the experience of *Vweela*. She became healer for: *Nkítá-Waamba*, *N'loko* (misfortune caused by being cursed), *Nkítá-Mánzánza*. She is a member of the "Association des Guérisseurs" since about 1987. She is also a peasant widow and mother of six children (all grown up).

Makítú Nkama, G. (M)

Interviewed on 28.5.95. at Quartier *Salongo (Leemfu)*. Born in 1951, *Makítú* is a former Catholic Primary School teacher and peasant. He has become "*Ngaangula*" in 1988 for his clan. *Ngaangula* is the official agent chosen by the ancestors to invest candidates with chiefhood (crowned Chief and crowned Lady). He is also the

appointed healer for his clan for various kinds of illnesses: *Wumba*, *Nkítá-Waamba*, *N'lálu*, *Nkósi-Kíbóta*, *Kinéni* or *Malúúnga* (Swollen abdomen), *Lubáánsi* (Stitch), *Ntúlu* (Tuberculosis), *N'loko* (Misfortunes caused by being cursed).

Makóónko Ndónzwaawu, I. (M)

Interviewed on 21 April 1995 at *Nkááandu*. He was born in 1915 at *Kikóka* and became healer in 1942, initiated by his mother for: *Yáámbá dí Nzázi* (Sores on the body), *Yáta* (Headaches), *Ndéfi* (Consequences of breaking one's oath).

Malaamba, Fr. (M)

Interviewed on 1 June 1995 at *Kiyánga*. He is sixty five years old and has been known as *Ngaangula Malaamba* since 1968, who is the appointed agent for the investiture of *Táá Mfúmu* (Crowned Chief) and *Máá Ndóóna* (Crowned Lady) for any clan which needs them. Hence, he is the only healer allowed to care for *Táá Mfúmu* and *Máá Ndóóna* when they are ill. He gives them an appropriate burial when they die. He is also the healer of various illnesses.

Maláka, J. (M)

Interviewed on 23 July 1995 at *Mbááanzá-Ngúúngu*. *J. Maláka* was born on 22 November 1937 at *Mbááanzá-Ngúúngu*. He is an agronomist by education and former Agent of the Administration in Zaïrean State; now he is a peasant. He is an influential member in his Catholic Parish of the Sacred Heart. (He is *Ndibu* or *Mundibu*, that is, a member of one of the subgroup of the Koongo ethnic groups of the Democratic Republic of Congo-Kinshasa). He is also a parish leader for the Scouting Movement for Catholic youth.

Masóóngélé má N'káánsa, A. (F)

Interviewed on 20 March 1995 at *Nkáandu*. She was born in 1919 and became *Ndóóná Bánkita* (the lady entrusted with the charge of the service of *Bankita*). Her initiation took place during *Vweela* in 1953, along with her two sisters *Basáwula* and *Makáya*. The latter was the number one person of the ceremony, because she was

appointed as *Máá N'tóombo* (the one who raised up the *mpoongo* from the water, and handed them to *Máá Ndóóná*). She has given up the practice of serving *Bankíta*.

Matóótá Ndóngala, H. (M)

Interviewed on 29 March 1995 at *Kisaantu*. He is a notable *Mukóongo/Mpangu* Jesuit Priest of more than 80 years old and 50 years of religious life. He has a long experience of the culture of *Bakóongo*. He is a former preacher in the village area where he used proverbs and other *Kóongo* cultural styles of discourse.

Mbaawu Makyáádi (M)

Interviewed along with *Ndóóná Nínga* on 27 February 1995 at *Mpése*. He is *Ndóóná Nínga*'s nephew (her brother's son) of about 20 years old. He lives in the village of *Mpese* with her, and in Kinshasa.

Mbáki, G. (M)

Interviewed at the parish office on 16 June 1995 at Nseelo. A young diocesan parish priest of *Nséélo*, about 35 years old.

Mbóongi, J. (F)

Interviewed on 21 May 1995 at *Nséke*. She is also the mother and grandmother of Twins. Leader (with *Budyóongo*) of the ritual *Kubóonda* which took place at her house on the evening of the same day.

Mbúdí Mákééngo (F)

Interviewed on 17 May 1995 at *Kimpútu*. She is a peasant woman in her fifties and healer for: **Wumba di** *Nsúlú Nkoombo* (miscarriage), *Kususuka*.

Mpyóoso, I. (M)

Interviewed on 23 May 1995 at *Nséke* (Quarter *Salongo*). He was initiated in about 1920 by a healer: *Taatu Mungambaawu* from *Bamfunuka* (a non *Kóongo* ethnic group). *Mpyóoso* is healer for: *Mabúta*, *Nyóká N'kawu*, *Ngímbi*, *Kiimpi*. He has bought the knowledge of healing. About 80 years old.

Ndílu (M)

Interviewed on 3 April 1995 at *Kitomisa (Kipáko)*. He is a man in his fifties, in charge of serving *Bankita*. *Ndílu* is *Lugéemba*'s brother-in-law; he collaborates with him in healing practice, especially *Mavumu ma búsiimbi* (a kind of miscarriage).

N'fúúnduNdómbele, S. (M)

Interviewed on 3 June 1995 at *Léemfu*. He is a 35 year old member of a Religious Order for 15 years in the diocese of *Kisaantu*. Head Master of Primary School at *Leemfu*. He has had a personal experience of being "cursed" by his uncle.

Ngwayila Ndoongalasiya (M)

Interviewed on 7 May 1995 at *Nkááandu*. *Ngwayila* has been a Parish Pastor of "E.C.U.S.E." (Eglises Chretiennes Union du Saint Esprit), the "Spirit Union of Christian Churches", for five years.

Nínga, (Ndoona-) (F)

Interviewed on 27 February 1995 and 8 March 1995 at *Mpése*. She is known as *Ndóóná Mbátá Nínga*. Aged about 60 years. She was crowned *Ndóóná N'liúnga* or *Ndóóná Bákulu* (Crowned Lady for the service of *bakúlu*) in 1980s, for her clan of *Mbátá zí Koongo*. She is a peasant woman and mother of six children (all grown up).

Nkíta, M. (F)

Interviewed on 2 June 1995 at *Kindínga (Léemfu)*. A peasant woman of about 50 years old. She has been nominated as candidate for *Ndóóná Bánkita*. She was waiting for the ceremony of initiation through *Vweela*.

N'laandu Lúyeeye (M)

Interviewed on 28 February and 6 March 1995 at *Nguungú-Lwaala (Mpése)*. *N'laandu* is well known as "*Nká Málakasa*", the powerful *ngaanga*. He was born in 1953. He failed to complete his studies at the Jesuit Secondary School at *Kisaantu* "CMS" (Centre Médico Scolaire). Initiated as *Ngaanga* between 1970 and 1977, he

practises divination and healing for: *Nkítá-N'ziinga*, *Wáámba*, *Yáta*, *Ngáámbu* (epilepsy), *Maládi a Mpese* (skin disease), *Mbádi-Mázebo* (diabetes), *N'fú*, *Lugéémbá lú Bámvíúmbi*, *Kiimpi* (madness), *Ngúmbi*, *N'lálu*, *Nkósi Kibóta*, *Kisúmbi kí Mákáka* (appendix), *Kéésa* or *Wumba*, *Mabúta* (disorders related to female fertility).

Nsyóóná Mángítúka, P. (M)

Interviewed on 10 April 1995 at *Ngééba*. *Nsyóóna* is known as "*Le Blanc*" (The White One), for he is an albino. He is about sixty years old and initiated as "*Táá Mfúmú Bánkita* (Chief invested with the power of *Bankita*) in 1952 through *Vweela*. He is a full time healer for: *Kiimpi* (madness), *Ngúmbi*, *Wumba*, *Mvíúmbi Mása*, *Nyóká-N'káwu*.

Nsúúmbu (M)

Interviewed on 16 July 1995 at *Matáámfu (Kipáko)*. Born on 10 September 1924, he was married in 1938, and is father of seven children. Peasant. He was initiated in 1938 by *Mpádi*, Simon, the founder of "*Eglise des Noirs en Afrique*" (the Church for the Black People in Africa) which is known nowadays as "*Dibúúndú dí Mpéévé a N'loongo*" (the Church of the Holy Spirit). *Nsúúmbu* is a healer for: *Kisoka*, *Mabúta*, *Kyúúngu* (dropsy), *Nkóóndi*, Diabetes.

N'tóómbo (F)

Interviewed on 26 March and 6 May 1995 at *Nkáádu*. She is known as *Máá N'tóómbo*; she performs in her ancestor's name with reference to the Holy Spirit. *Bankita* as well as the Christianity affect her practice of healing. She heals *Wumba*, *Nkita*, *Wáámba*, *N'fú*, *Tolula*.

Nyéémbá Dósi (M)

Interviewed on 3 April 1995 at *Kitomisa (Kipáko)*. A man of about 35 years old. During the period of field research, he was a patient receiving treatment at *Lugéémbe's* for *Ngulu-Manyuka* or *Kintolula* (total paralysis).

N'yési, I. (M)

Interviewed on 12 May 1995 at *Kingofo (Nséélo area)*. *N'yési* is known as *Táá Ngúmbi* (the man who has raised *Bankíta* from the water. About 65 years old, he was initiated through *Vweela* to become healer for *Wumba, Ngúmbi, Mabúta, Kiimpi, Kususuka. Kisúmbi kí Nsóónso.*

N'zaamba (M)

Interviewed on 12 May 1995 at *Nséélo*. He was born in 1936, was married in 1957. Initiated by his mother without going through the experience of *Vweela*. Peasant and part time healer for: *Zyééta, Nyóká-N'káwu, N'fú, Ngúlunga.*

Síta, H. (F)

Interviewed on 23 March 1995 at *Kisaantu*. About seventy years old. She is a widow working in a boarding school for many years as cook. She is expert in rituals for the twins.

Yáfu, I and *Nzázi, A.* (Couple)

Interviewed on 22 May 1995 at *Nséke*. *Yáfu* was born in 1937. As a young man of twenty years old he was initiated by his mother without going through *Vweela*. Parent of eight children (seven alive). Former craftsman trained by the Jesuits. He is healer for *Yáámbá dí Nzázi, Mwiilu-Nkeeni, Nkónká-N'tu.*

Zéénga, G. (M)

Interviewed on 2 June 1995 at *Kindíínga (Léémfu)*. A peasant man f about 60 years old. He as good experience in cursings and blessings.

1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amadiume, J. 1992. *Male Daughters, Female husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Amba Oduyoye, M. 1997. "The African Experience of God through the Eyes of an African Woman", *The Way*, Vol. 37, No.3 (July 1997), pp.195-206.
- Augé, M. and Herzlich, C. 1995. *The Meaning of Illness: Anthropology, History and Sociology*. Harwood: Academic Publishers.
- Balandier, G. 1963. *La vie quotidienne au royaume de Kongo*. Paris, Hachette.
- 1970. *The Sociology of Black Africa: Social Dynamics in Central Africa*. London: André Deutsch Ltd.
- Barthes, R. 1981. *Mythologies*. London, Granada.
- Bebey, F. 1975. *African Music: A People's Art*. London, Harrap.
- Bell, C. 1992. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bentley, W. Holman. 1887. *Dictionary and Grammar of the Kongo Language*. London: Published by the Baptist Missionary Society.
- Berliner, P. 1993. *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bimwenyi Kweshi, O. 1994. "Réflexion théologique sur la spiritualité africaine chrétienne". *La prière africaine*. Kinshasa, Actes du 2d Colloque international, 10-12 janvier 1994, pp.99-115.
- Blacking, J. (Ed.). 1977. *The Anthropology of the Body*. London: Academic Press.
- Bockie, S. 1993. *Death and the Invisible Powers: The World of Kongo Belief*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Boddy, J. 1989. *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Brenda, E.F. Beck. 1982. *The Three Twins*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Buakasa, Tkm. 1980. *L'Impensé du discours: "kindoki" et "n'kisi" en pays Kongo du Zaïre*. 2e ed.. Kinshasa: Faculté de Théologie Catholique.
- ---- 1988. *Lire la religion africaine*. Louvain-la-Neuve. Editions NORAF.

Chilivumbo, A.B. 1972. "Vimbuza or Mashawe: A Mystic Therapy". *African Music*, Journal of the African Music Society, Vol. 5, 1972, No.2 pp.6-9.

Csordas, T.J. 1994. *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

, Cuvelier, J. and Jadin, L. 1954. *L'ancien Congo d'après les archives romaines, 1518-1640*. Bruxelles: Académie royale des sciences coloniales.

De Haes, R. 1985. "Le ministère de la guérison", *Revue Africaine de Theologie*, Vol.9, No.17, pp.31-41.

Denis, L. 1939. "Chansons des Bakongo", *Congo II*, No.4. Bruxelles: Goernaere. Imprimeur du Roi, Ed.

, Devisch, R. 1993. *Weaving the Threads of Life: The Khita Gyn-Eco-Logical Healing Cult Among the Yaka*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Doutreloux, A. 1967. *L'ombre des Fétiches: Société et culture Yombe*. Louvain. Ed. Nauwelaerts.

Drewal, M. Thompson. 1992. *Yoruba Ritual: Performances, Play, Agency*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

El Alami, N. 1993. *Beyond the Fragments: The State, Gender and the Novel in Africa*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Birmingham.

Eliade, M. 1987. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. San Diego. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

---- 1991. *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

Fabian, J. 1990. *Power and Performance*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Fardon, R. 1990. *Between God, the Dead and the Wild: Chamba Interpretations of Religion and Ritual*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, London.

Finnegan, R. 1970. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

---- (Ed.). 1978. *Oral Poetry*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

---- 1992. *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices*. London: Routledge.

Fink Helga, E. 1989. *Religion, Disease and Healing in Ghana: A Case Study of Traditional Dormaa Medicine*. Munchen: Trickster-Wiss.

- Furniss, G. 1996. *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.
- Gay, J. 1973. *Red Dust on the Green Leaves: A Kpelle Twins' childhood*. By InterCulture Associates, Inc., Connecticut: the Val-Ballou Press, USA.
- Gennep, (van) A. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Goodman, F.D.; Henney, J.H.; Pressel, E. 1974. *Trance, Healing, Hallucination: Three Field Studies in Religious Experience*. New York: Wiley-Interscience.
- Grimes, R.L. 1982. *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. Washington D.C.: University of America Press.
- Griaule, M. 1970.: *African Conversations With Ogotommeli Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hebga, M. 1973. *et Croyance et Guérison*. Yaoundé: Editions CLE.
- Holm, J. and Bowker, J. (Ed.). 1994. *Attitudes to Nature*. London: Printer Publishers Ltd.
- Humphrey, C. and Laidlaw, J. 1994. *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Jackson, I.V. (Ed.). 1985. *More than Drumming: Essays on African and Afro-Latin American Music and Musicians*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Jacobson-Widding, A. (Ed.). 1991. *Body and Space: Symbolic Models of Unity and Division in African Cosmology and Experience*. Uppsala: Studies in Cultural Anthropology.
- Janzen, J.M. 1978. *The Quest for Therapy in Lower Zaïre*. With the collaboration of William Arkininstall, MD. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 1982. *Lemba, 1650-1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- 1992. *Ngoma: Discourses of Healing in Central and Southern Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- and MacGaffey, W. 1974. *An Anthology of Kongo Religion*. (Publications in Anthropology, No.5). Lawrence: University of Kansas.
- Kalilombe, P. 1995. "Spirituality in the African Perspective", *African and Indian Monastic Bulletin*, No.58, pp.7-22.

- Kassim, Kone. 1995. *Mande Zana ni Ntalen Wa ni'ko* (More than a thousand *Mande* Proverbs in Bambara and English). Mother Tongue Editions/*An fasokan*. West Newbury
- Katz, R. 1982. *Boiling Energy: Community Healing Among the Kalahari Kung*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Keil, C. 1979. *Tiv Song*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kibwila-Yala, A.M. 1994. "A l'école de prière: une pastorale initiatique de la mystique évangélique", *La prière africaine*. Kinshasa: Actes du 2d colloque international, 10-12 janvier 1994, pp.45-70.
- Kipury, N. 1983. *Oral Literature of the Maasai*. Nairobi, London. Heinemann. Educational Books.
- Kriel, A. 1989. *Roots of African Thought 2: Source of Power* – (a Pilot Study). Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Kwabena Nketia, J.H. 1974. *The Music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. London.
- La Fontaine, J.S. (Ed.). 1972. *The Interpretation of Ritual*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Laman, K.E. 1953. *The Kongo I*. Stockholm. Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, IV.
- ---- 1957. *The Kongo II*. Uppsala. Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, VIII.
- ---- 1962. *The Kongo III*. Lund. Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, XII.
- ---- 1968. *The Kongo IV*. Uppsala. Studia Upsaliensia, XVI.
- Lewis, I.M. (Ed.). 1991. *Women's Medicine*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.
- MacGaffey, W. 1970. *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ---- 1983. *Modern Kongo Prophets: Religion in a Plural Society*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- ---- 1986. *Religion and Society in Central Africa: The Bakongo of Lower Zaïre*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- ---- 1991. *Art and Healing of the Bakongo: Commented by Themselves: Minkisi from the Laman Collection*. Stockholm: Etnografiska.

- Malidoma, P. Somé. 1994. *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*. New York: Penguin Arkana.
- Maxwell, K. 1983. *Bemba Myth and Ritual*. New York: Lang.
- Mbiti, J. 1970. *African Religion and Philosophy*. New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc.
- Mbombok, M.M. 1983. *L'univers de la parole*. Yaoundé. Editions CLE.
- McManus, J. 1994. *Healing in the Spirit: Inner Healing and Deliverance in Today's Church*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.
- Meehan, B. 1988. *The Healing Power of Prayer*. Liguori: Liguori Publications.
- Merriam, Alan P. 1964. *The Anthropology of Music*. Evanston: North-western University Press.
- Milingo, E. 1984. *The World in Between: Christian Healing and the Struggle for Spiritual Survival*. London: C. Hurst and Company.
- Mullings, L. 1984. *Therapy, Ideology, and Social Change: Mental Healing in Urban Ghana*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mufuta, K. 1983. "Croyances traditionnelles et pratiques spirituelles au Zaïre". *L'Afrique et ses formes de vie spirituelles*. Actes du 2e colloque international, Kinshasa 21-27 Novembre 1983, pp.173-192. Cahiers des religions africaines, vol.17, n.33-34, janvier – juillet 1983.
- Nketia, J.H. 1955. *Funeral Dirges of the Akan People*. Achimota: University College of the Gold Coast.
- Ntole, K. 1990. *Chants de cultes du Zaïre: (Chez les Bahemba et les Baluba). Essai d'étude ethnolinguistique*. Paris: Editions Peeters Selaef avec le concours du Ministère des Relations extérieures.
- Obenga, T. 1984. *Littérature traditionnelle des Mbochi: Etsée le Yamba*. Paris: Presence africaine.
- Okpewho, I. 1983. *Myth in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Olayemi, V. 1971. *Orin Ibeji: (Songs in Praise of Twins)*. Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan/Occasional Publication, No. 26.
- Oosthuizen, G.C. & Irving, H. 1992. *Empirical Studies of African Independent/Indigenous Churches*. Lewiston. Queenston. Lampeter. The Edwin Mellen Press.

- Rosyⁿ (de), E. 1981. *Les yeux de ma chèvre: Sur les pas des maîtres de la nuit en pays douala (Caméroun)*. Paris: Editions Plon.
- Rycroft, D.K. 1975. "The Zulu Bow Songs of Princess Mogogo", *African Music* Vol. 4, 1975/6, pp.41-97.
- Sharp, L. 1993.: *The Possessed and the Dispossessed: Spirits, Identity, and Power in a Madagascar Migrant Town*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Singer, P. (Ed.). 1977. *Traditional Healing: New Science or New Colonialism?* Rochester: Oakland University.
- Thorpe, S.A. 1993. *African Traditional Religions: An Introduction*. Pretoria. University of South Africa Press.
- Toit (du), B.M. (Ed.). 1985. *African Healing Strategies*. London: A Division of Conch Magazine, Limited.
- Turner, V. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspect of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca. Cornell University Press.
- ---- 1968. *The Drums of Afflictions: A Study of Religious Processes among the Ndembu of Zambia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press for The International African Institute.
- ---- 1991. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- ---- E. with Blodgett, W. 1991. *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Vansina, J. 1973. *The Tyo Kingdom of the Middle Congo 1880-1892*. London: Oxford University Press.
- 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. London. James Currey.
- Van Wing, J. 1959. *Etudes Bakongo: sociologie, religion et magie*. 2nd ed. Bruxelles: Desclé de Brouwer.
- ---- 1920. "Nzo Longo ou les rites de la puberté chez les Bakongo". *Congo II*, Décembre 1920, pp.229-247.
- Vumuka ku Nanga. 1996. "Guérison et exorcisme", *Téléma*, 2/96, pp.47-57.

